The *Knights*

Dramatis Personae

DEMOSTHENES, A SERVANT[1]

NICIAS, A SERVANT

PAPHLAGON [= CLEON][2]

AGORACRITUS, A SAUSAGE-SELLER

CHORUS OF KNIGHTS[3]

DEMOS[4]

---

1. Against the text of the Budé, but with the OCT and Sommerstein, *Knights,* I follow the principal MSS in reading here the names of Demosthenes and Nicias, rather than Servant A and Servant B. Dindorf contends that the proper names were written, not by the poet, but by later scribes and inferred from the text; Wilhelm Dindorf, *Aristophanis Comoediae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1837), 291. At all events, the identity of the "servants" is not controversial.

2. The principal MSS here identify Paphlagon as Cleon, although he is almost always referred to as Paphlagon, not Cleon, in the text of the play (the exception is 976). Cleon, whom Aristophanes presents as a dangerous demagogue, was active in Athenian democratic politics from about 429 to 422 B.C.E., when he was killed while fighting to recapture Amphipolis from Spartan control.

3. The Athenian Knights or cavalry, here said to be one thousand strong (225), were drawn from the wealthy upper middle class, since they were responsible for the cost of supplying and outfitting their horses.

4. Here personified as a single householder ("Mr. Demos"), *demos* refers to a political class in Athens, that of the great majority of citizens who as such were poor and hence largely uneducated. "Democracy" is of course the rule of the demos, of the poor majority.

The *Knights*

[*Outside the house of Demos on the Pnyx, in Athens*]

DEMOSTHENES[1]

[*Running out of the house*]

Yyy-ououououououououch! What evils! Yyy-ououououch!

If only the gods would evilly destroy that evil, newly purchased Paphlagon,[2]

Him and his schemes!

For from the time he entered the household

He's been inflicting blows on the servants nonstop!

NICIAS[3]

Very evilly indeed, that guy, first among Paphlagonians,

Him and his slanders!

DEMOSTHENES

[*To Nicias*] Wretched fellow, how're you doing?

---

1. Demosthenes (d. 413 B.C.E.) was among Athens' most distinguished generals, notable for his ingenuity, ability to learn from mistakes, and military tactics. He died in the course of Athens' attempt to conquer the island of Sicily.

2. The name seems to be chosen, not to suggest a connection to the people of Paphlagonia, on the Black Sea coast of north-central Anatolia, but rather to bring to mind the verb *paphladzō,* "to boil, bluster, splutter." Consider 919–20 below as well as *Peace* 313–14, where the word is used to describe Cleon.

3. Nicias (ca. 470–413 B.C.E.) was an outstanding Athenian general, older and more cautious than his contemporary Demosthenes. Both generals died in battle on the island of Sicily.

NICIAS

Badly, just like you!

DEMOSTHENES

Well, come over here then, so
We may wail a song of Olympus[4] in concert.

DEMOSTHENES AND NICIAS

"Mumu mumu mumu mumu mumu mumu!"

DEMOSTHENES

Why are we uttering this plaintive lament? Shouldn't we seek out some
Salvation for the two of us, rather than keep on crying?

NICIAS

So what might it be?

DEMOSTHENES

You say.

NICIAS

Now *you* tell *me,*
So I don't have to fight.

DEMOSTHENES

By Apollo, not I!
But be bold and say it, then I'll tell you.

4. Reputed to have been the founder of Greek flute (*aulos*) music, to whom many famous tunes were attributed.

NICIAS

"Would that you might say for me, what it is I ought to say."[5]
But there's no boldness in me. However might
I say it, then, in a subtle-Euripidean way?

DEMOSTHENES

Don't do that to me, not to me, don't chervil[6] me over!
Just discover some slinky-sly dance to get away from the master!

NICIAS

So say "lettuce . . . height . . . ale . . .," putting it together like this.

DEMOSTHENES

Okay: I say "lettuce-height-ale."

NICIAS

Now after that, say "auto hear."

DEMOSTHENES

"Auto hear!"

NICIAS

Beautifully done!
Now, just as if you're wanking, say it gently at first:
"Lettuce-height-ale," then "auto hear," and then bring it on faster.

5. Euripides, *Hippolytus* 345. Some editors move this two lines down, so as to exemplify the "subtle-Euripidean way."

6. Aristophanes likes to imply that Euripides' mother was a humble seller of herbs, which she surely was not; see *Acharnians* 457 and 478.

DEMOSTHENES

[*Speaking ever more quickly*] "Lettuce-height-ale-auto-hear,
lettuce-height-ale . . . let us hightail it outta here!"[7]

NICIAS

Wasn't that sweet?!

DEMOSTHENES

Yes, by Zeus! Except, that is, when it comes to my skin—
I'm afraid about this omen.

NICIAS

Why so?

DEMOSTHENES

Because the skin of wankers comes off![8]

NICIAS

Well then, the most excellent thing, given what's available to us
two,
Is to go and prostrate ourselves before images of the gods.

DEMOSTHENES

What "images"?!? Come on now, do you really believe in gods?

NICIAS

I do indeed!

DEMOSTHENES

Using what sort of evidence?

---

7. That is, "let's desert," presumably from Athens to Sparta.

8. Demosthenes in effect expresses concern for being flayed as punishment for being a runaway slave.

NICIAS

That I'm hated by the gods! Isn't that likely enough?

DEMOSTHENES

You're doing a good job of convincing me! But let's examine it by looking in another direction.

Do you want me to explain the matter to the audience?

NICIAS

Not a bad idea. But let's ask them for one thing:
To make it plain to us by their facial expressions
If they're delighting in our words and affairs.[9]

DEMOSTHENES

So now I'd like to speak. The master of the two of us
Is a rustic by temperament, a bean-chewer, quick to anger—
Demos of the Pnyx,[10] a disagreeable little geezer,
Half-deaf. On the previous New Moon day[11] he
Bought a slave, a leatherworker, Paphlagon,
Someone exceedingly crooked and slanderous.
This fellow, the leather-Paphlagonian, recognizing the old man's ways,
Fawned over the master,
And started wheedling, toadying, flattering, utterly deceiving him
With the odd leather scraps, saying such things as these:
"O Demos, have your bath, once you've first tried a single case.

9. Or "troubles" (*pragmata*).

10. The location of the Athenian Assembly.

11. That is, market day (see also *Acharnians* 999).

Open up, swallow it down, have dessert, take three obols.[12]
Do you want me to serve your evening meal?" And then
snatching up
Whatever one of us is preparing for the master,
Paphlagon gladly gives it to him. And the other day, I
Was kneading a Laconian barley-cake at Pylos,[13]
How very much like the dirtiest crook did he run around me and
snatch it up,
And he himself served the cake *I'd* kneaded!
Us he drives away and doesn't allow anyone else
To tend to the master, but holding a leather flyswatter,
While [Demos] is eating, he stands by and scares off . . . the
orators.
And he chants oracles: the old man longs for Sibyls![14]
And because he sees how stupid [the old man] is,
He's come up with a technical art: those within [the household]
He falsely slanders outright. And then we're flogged!
But Paphlagon, running around after the servants,
Makes his demands, stirs up trouble, takes bribes, saying these
things:
"Do you see Hylas being flogged on my say-so?
If you won't obey me, you'll die this very day!"
And we pay up. If we don't, then while being beaten

12. Cleon had raised from two obols to three the pay for serving on the juries, according to the scholium on *Wasps* 88; see also 255 below.

13. Demosthenes here alludes to his capture of Spartan soldiers on the island of Sphacteria, just off the coast of Pylos. Cleon managed to claim credit for the military feat, although Thucydides makes clear that the operation was Demosthenes' own.

14. Ecstatic prophetesses.

By the old man we crap out eight times as much!
So now let's think this through and be quick about it, good fellow,
As to what sort of path we two ought to turn to, and to whom.

NICIAS

The most excellent thing would be that "let's hightail it," good fellow.

DEMOSTHENES

But it's impossible for anything to escape Paphlagon's notice,
Since he himself watches over everything. For he has one leg
In Pylos, the other in the Assembly.
So wide is the step he's taken
That his butthole is right in Gapesville,[15]
Both hands are in Shakedown-town, and his mind is among the Kleptos![16]

NICIAS

Then the most excellent thing for us both would be to die!

DEMOSTHENES

Just consider
How we might die most courageously.

NICIAS

How indeed, how might it come to pass most courageously?

---

15. Literally, "among the Chaonians," the first syllable of the name suggesting also "gaping" (*chaos*).

16. The name of the first (*Aitōlois,* "among the Aetolians") suggests the verb *aitein,* which can mean "to demand something from someone"; and the name of the second (*Klōpidōn*), "a small Attic hamlet" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.), puns on *klōps,* meaning "thief."

Best for us is to drink bull's blood.[17]
For Themistocles' death is preferable.[18]

DEMOSTHENES

No, by Zeus, but [let's drink] unmixed wine of the Good Divinity![19]
For we might perhaps deliberate about something useful!

NICIAS

"Unmixed wine," come on! With you it's always about drinking!
How could a man deliberate about something useful when he's drunk?!?

DEMOSTHENES

Is that right?! You're a babbling-fountain-of-nonsense!
You dare reproach wine when it comes to thinking?
Could you discover something more practically useful than wine?
You see, whenever human beings drink, then
They are wealthy, get things done, win lawsuits,

17. A near quotation of a fragment of Sophocles. It was believed that drinking bull's blood brought about quick death; consider Herodotus, *Histories* 3.15.

18. In other words, death by suicide. Themistocles was the principal architect of Athenian naval supremacy and an extraordinarily capable leader of Athens. He was exiled, however, and eventually made his way to a place of prominence in the Persian court. There, Thucydides reports, Themistocles died a natural death—but it was popularly believed that he committed suicide by drinking a potion or poison (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 1.138).

19. Or "good daemon." "The first libation at wine-drinking in general and in the Dionysos sanctuary in particular" was made in honor of the "Good Divinity" or daemon (*agathou daimonos*); Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 180.

Are happy, benefit friends.
But, quick, bring out a pitcher of wine for me,
So I may water my mind and say something clever!

NICIAS

Ah, what will you with your drinking do to us?

DEMOSTHENES

Good fellow, just bring it. And I'll put my feet up. [*Exit Nicias*]
For if I get drunk, I'm going to besprinkle all these things here
With deliberations and little judgments and insights!

[*Nicias returns*]

NICIAS

How lucky I didn't get caught inside,
Stealing the wine!

DEMOSTHENES

Tell me, what's Paphlagon doing?

NICIAS

The malicious sorcerer's been licking up cake-and-sauce that's been publicly confiscated
And he's snoring away, drunk and snoozing among his leather hides.

DEMOSTHENES

Come now, pour a large portion of unmixed libation for me!

NICIAS

So take it and make offering to the Good Divinity.

DEMOSTHENES

Quaff, quaff down the wine of the Pramnian[20] divinity!

[*Demosthenes chugs down the wine*]

O Good Divinity, it's your plan, not mine!

NICIAS

Say—I beseech you!—what is it?

DEMOSTHENES

Quickly steal the oracles

Belonging to Paphlagon and bring them here from inside,

While he sleeps.

NICIAS

So be it. But of the divinity

I'm afraid, lest I become wretchedly unhappy![21] [*Nicias goes back into the house*]

DEMOSTHENES

Well now, let me get the pitcher for myself

So that I may water my mind and say something clever.

[Nicias returns]

NICIAS

How loudly Paphlagon farts and snores!

As a result, he didn't notice when I got the sacred oracle

That he was guarding especially closely.

---

20. Pramnian wine was noted for its excellence.

21. The word translated as "wretchedly unhappy" (*kakodaimonos*) means more literally, "having a bad daemon"; Nicias is afraid that, by stealing oracles, he will offend the Good Divinity (see n. 19 above) and so be made unhappy, i.e., be possessed of a bad daemon.

DEMOSTHENES

O Wisest One!
Bring it here, so I can read it. But hurry up and
Pour me a drink! Come, let me see, what's in it? [*Reads the oracle*]
O Prophecies! [*Points to the cup*] Give it to me, give me the little cup quick!

NICIAS

There. Now what does the oracle assert?

DEMOSTHENES

Pour me another.

NICIAS

"Pour me another" is in the prophecies?!?

DEMOSTHENES

O Bacis![22]

NICIAS

What is it?

DEMOSTHENES

Give me the little cup, quick!

NICIAS

Bacis sure used the little cup a lot!

DEMOSTHENES

Bloody Paphlagon! You've been guarding these things for a long time,
Because you dread the oracle pertaining to yourself!

22. The name of a prophet in Eleon, in Boeotian territory. His prophecies seem to have been popular in the course of the Peloponnesian War.

NICIAS

Why?!?

DEMOSTHENES

In here it says that he himself is destroyed!

NICIAS

And how?

DEMOSTHENES

How, you ask? The oracle expressly says
That first there comes to be a dealer of oakum,
Who will first take hold of the city's affairs.[23]

NICIAS

That's one seller.[24] What's next? Say it!

DEMOSTHENES

After him, in turn, is, second, a sheep dealer.[25]

NICIAS

That's two sellers. And what must happen to *him?*

DEMOSTHENES

He must hold power, until another man, more loathsome
Than he is, arises. After this, he's destroyed.

---

23. This is taken to be a reference to Eucrates, a little-known Athenian politician; see also 254 below.

24. Sellers, or men engaged in commerce generally, were looked down on as low-class, at least by aristocrats.

25. The scholiast reports the view that this is Lysicles, who is mentioned explicitly below at 765. He is said to have lived with Pericles' mistress, Aspasia, after Pericles' death.

For Paphlagon the leather-seller succeeds him,
A robber, shrieker, with the voice of the Cycloborus [River].[26]

NICIAS

So the sheep dealer had to be destroyed
At the hands of a leather-seller?

DEMOSTHENES

Yes, by Zeus!

NICIAS

Ah, wretched me!
So from where, then, might one more seller come into being?

DEMOSTHENES

There is still one more, possessed of an extraordinary art!

NICIAS

Say—I beseech you!—who is it?!?

DEMOSTHENES

Am I to say?

NICIAS

Yes, by Zeus!

DEMOSTHENES

He who utterly destroys [Paphlagon] is . . . a sausage-seller!

NICIAS

A sausage-seller?!? O Poseidon, what an art!
Come, where will we find this man?

26. A raging river known for the sound produced by its torrent; see also *Acharnians* 381.

DEMOSTHENES

Let's seek him out.

NICIAS[27]

But here's one coming over
Into the marketplace, as if divinely!

DEMOSTHENES

O Blessed
Sausage-Seller, here, here, dearest fellow,
Walk over, you're a savior made manifest, to the city and to the two of us!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

What is it? Why are you calling me?

DEMOSTHENES

Come here, so you may learn
How fortunate you are and happy in a big way!

NICIAS

[*To Demosthenes*] Just take this table from him and
Inform him of what the god's oracle contains.
I'll go and keep a watchful eye on the Paphlagonian.

[*Nicias leaves*]

DEMOSTHENES

So now: first put your equipment on the ground.
Then make obeisance to the earth and the gods.

27. Some editions, including the Budé, give these lines to Demosthenes, against the evidence of the majority of the MSS.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

There. What is it?

DEMOSTHENES

O blessed fellow, O wealthy,
O you who are nobody now, but super-big tomorrow!
O commander of the happy Athenians!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Why, good fellow, don't you let me wash my tripe
And sell my sausages, rather than ridicule me?

DEMOSTHENES

You moron, "tripe" indeed! [*Pointing to the audience*] Look over here:
Do you see the rows of the people there?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I see them.

DEMOSTHENES

You yourself will be the leader of *all* of them,
And of the marketplace and the harbors and the Pnyx.
You'll trample on the Council[28] and dress down generals!
You'll chain people up and lock 'em down, and in the Prytaneum you'll . . . get blow jobs![29]

28. The Athenian Council (*boulē* or *bouleutērion*) was a much smaller elected body than the Assembly (*ekklēsia*) and charged with (among other things) determining the matters that would be taken up by the Assembly.

29. A surprise substitution for "dine"; Athenians citizens who performed some signal service to the city were given free meals for life in the Prytaneum. Following the suggestion of Lowell Edmunds, I read the future middle form of

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Me?

DEMOSTHENES

Yes, you! And you don't even see everything yet!
Just get up here on this table
And look down on *all* the islands around!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I see them down there.

DEMOSTHENES

What else? The ports and the merchantmen?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I do indeed.

DEMOSTHENES

How then are you not happy in a big way?
And now cast your one eye toward Caria,
The right one, and the other one toward Carthage.[30]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll be happy, if I twist myself cross-eyed?

DEMOSTHENES

No, but it's on account of you that all these things are for sale.

---

the verb (*laikasei*) found in one MS, as distinguished from the active form found in most MSS; Edmunds, *Cleon, "Knights," and Aristophanes' Politics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987), 68. On the meaning and tone of the word, see the translation of the *Acharnians,* n. 20.

30. Caria was in western Anatolia, well to the east of Athens; Carthage was in North Africa.

For you're becoming—as this here oracle says—
A real man[31] of the very greatest sort!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Tell me—how am I,
A sausage-seller, going to become a real man?

DEMOSTHENES

It's through this very thing, in fact, that you're becoming great—
Because you are low-class and of the marketplace and bold!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I don't judge myself to deserve greatness!

DEMOSTHENES

Uh oh . . . Why in the world are you denying that you yourself are deserving?
You seem to me to be aware of having something noble about yourself . . .
Surely you're not descended from noble and good gentlemen, *are you?!?*

SAUSAGE-SELLER

By the gods no!
I'm from nothing except what's low-class!

DEMOSTHENES

[*With great relief*] O Blessed Luck!
So great is the good you've got, with a view to [political] affairs!

---

31. An *anēr,* a "real man," as distinguished from a mere "human being" (*anthrōpos*).

SAUSAGE-SELLER

But, good fellow, I don't have any knowledge of the things of the Muses,
Except for letters—and even this is really pretty bad.

DEMOSTHENES

This is the only thing that's hurt you—that it's even "really pretty bad."
For demagoguery[32] no longer belongs to a man acquainted with the things of the Muses or to one whose ways are upright,
But to one who is unlearned and loathsome. But don't
Cast aside the things the gods are giving you in the prophecies!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

How then does the oracle speak?

DEMOSTHENES

It speaks well, by the gods,
Posing riddles in a way that's somehow complex and wise!
"But when a crooked-clawed leather-eagle grasps
With its jaws a boneheaded blood-drinking serpent,
Then indeed the garlic-sauce of the Paphlagonians is destroyed,
But to tripe-sellers god grants great glory,
Unless they choose to sell sausages instead."

SAUSAGE-SELLER

So how do these things relate to me? Teach me.

DEMOSTHENES

This Paphlagon here is a "leather-eagle."

---

32. That is, "the leading of the demos" (*dēmagōgia*); this is "the earliest known use" of the term (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.).

SAUSAGE-SELLER

But what's "crooked-clawed"?

DEMOSTHENES

Pretty much what it says:
That with crooked hands he snatches and takes away.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And the "serpent" relates to what?

DEMOSTHENES

This is completely obvious!
For the serpent is long, and the sausage, in turn, is long.
Then "blood-drinking" is both the sausage and the serpent.
It contends, then, that the serpent will overpower the leather-eagle,
Unless he is softened by words.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

The prophecies flatter me. But I wonder how
I can govern the demos.

DEMOSTHENES

A very paltry task! Just do the things you do!
Stir up *all* the [political] affairs and turn them together into sausage,
And always win the demos over
By sweetening things with gourmet phraselets!
And the rest that's yours is demagogic too:
Brutal voice, bad lineage, marketplace made.
You have *everything* needed for political governance!
Oracles as well as the Pythia[33] concur!

33. That is, Apollo's priestess at Delphi.

But wreathe yourself and pour a libation to . . . Bonehead[34]
And see that you ward off[35] the man!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And what ally
Will I have?
For the wealthy
Are afraid of him, and the crowd of the poor is petrified!

DEMOSTHENES

But there are knights—one thousand good men
Who hate him—they'll come to your aid,
And the noble and good gentlemen among the citizenry
And whoever is clever among the spectators.
And I, together with them, as well as the god, will assist!
And don't be afraid, for he isn't represented [onstage by a portrait-mask]:
Out of fear of him, no mask-maker was willing
To make a likeness of him! At all events
He'll be recognized, for the audience is clever.

NICIAS

[*From within*] Ah wretched me, Paphlagon is coming out!

PAPHLAGON

[*Shouting loudly*] No, by the Twelve Gods,[36] you two won't be rejoicing
'Cause for a long time now you've been conspiring against the demos!

34. A made-up divinity; see also 198, where the same word appears.
35. Or "defend yourself against."
36. That is, the twelve Olympian gods.

[*Notices Demosthenes' cup*] What's that Chalcidian wine-cup doing here?!?

There's no way you two aren't inciting the Chalcidians to revolt![37]

Perish! Die! Both you bloodiest bastards!

DEMOSTHENES

[*To the Sausage-Seller*] You there, why're you fleeing? Won't you stay?!? O Well-Born

Sausage-Seller, don't forsake the affairs!

[*Turns to call offstage*] Men, Knights, draw near! Now is the crucial moment! O Simon,

O Panaetius,[38] won't you drive toward the right side?

[*To the Sausage-Seller*] The men are near; just defend yourself—pivot and charge!

The dust cloud is visible as they press hard together.

Just defend yourself and pursue him and put him to rout!

CHORUS OF KNIGHTS

Strike, strike the dirty crook and disturber-of-the-cavalry-corps

And tax farmer, and chasm and Charybdis[39] of thievery!

And a crook and a crook! I'll say that about him many times,

37. Chalcis was a city on the island of Euboea, under Athenian control (consider *Clouds* 211–12) and important to Athens for its agriculture. To the displeasure of Athens, Sparta had recently founded a new colony, Heraclea, in Trachis, which could facilitate invasion of the island and foment rebellion against Athens; see Thucydides 3.92–93.

38. According to the scholiast, these are the names of two actual hipparchs or cavalry commanders. A man named Simon wrote a treatise on horsemanship (see Xenophon, *On Horsemanship* 1.1).

39. Name of a deadly whirlpool in Homer.

Since he's been a dirty crook many times a day!
Just strike and pursue and stir and mix him up
And loathe him—for we do!—and, with a shout, attack!
But be careful lest he escape you, for he knows the routes
By which Eucrates[40] fled straight to the bran shops!

PAPHLAGON

O Elders of the Juries! Brethren of Three Obols[41]
Whom I feed by crying out both justly and unjustly!
Come to my aid: I'm being beaten up by conspiratorial men!

CHORUS

Justly so, since you gobble up the public funds before the lot has given you [an office],
And, as if picking figs, you squeeze officials undergoing audit, examining
Whoever among them is green or ripe or unripe.[42]
And if you know of anyone among them who refrains from meddlesome-busyness and is all agape,
You lead him down from the Chersonese[43] and trip him up with slander,
Then, twisting his shoulder around, you stomp on his gut!
And you examine who among the citizens is a sheep-like simpleton,

40. Eucrates was an Athenian politician who apparently dealt in oakum and bran; see 129 above.

41. That is, the Athenian demos; on the three obols paid to jurors, see 51 above.

42. The Budé moves 264–65 so that they follow at this point in the text. I follow the reading of the principal MSS.

43. This probably refers to Athenian merchants settled in what is today the Gallipoli peninsula.

Wealthy and not crooked and quaking at the prospect of troubles.[44]

PAPHLAGON

Do *you* join in on the attack?!? And I, men, am being beaten up on your account,
Because I was about to say that it is just
To erect a memorial in the city in gratitude for your courage!

CHORUS

What a boaster! Smooth-as-leather! You see the sorts of things he does to insinuate himself!
Just as if we were old men, he dupes with stupid tricks!

SAUSAGE-SELLER [OR PERHAPS CHORUS][45]

But if he's victorious in this way, he'll be pummeled in that way,[46]
And if he ducks out, he'll butt against my leg right here!

PAPHLAGON

O City and Demos! I'm punched in the gut by wild animals!

DEMOSTHENES

And you shout, just as you're always turning the city upside down.

---

44. "Troubles" (*pragmata*) could also refer to (public) "affairs."

45. The order and attribution of these lines are contested, although the order followed here is supported by important MSS. The Budé gives the lines to the Chorus, perhaps rightly.

46. Commentators divide over the proper reading and meaning of this line. Some object to "victorious," although it is in the MSS; and it is unclear whether the Sausage-Seller (if indeed the line is his; see previous note) is pointing to, say, his fist, or whether the Chorus (if the line is theirs) is pointing to the Sausage-Seller. See in general J.C.B. Lowe, "The Manuscript Evidence for Changes of Speaker in Aristophanes," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 9:1 (1962): 35–39.

SAUSAGE-SELLER[47]

Well, with this shouting I'll rout you first!

CHORUS

[*To Paphlagon*] If you're victorious with your shouting, hurray for you.

But if he [*pointing to the Sausage-Seller*] outstrips you in shamelessness, then the victory cake is ours!

PAPHLAGON

[*Pointing to the Sausage-Seller*] This man here I denounce, and I assert that

He's exporting, for the Peloponnesian triremes, . . . stew![48]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I for my part denounce *him,* yes, by Zeus, because with an empty gut

He runs into the Prytaneum, then runs out again with a full one!

DEMOSTHENES

Yes, by Zeus, and for bringing out forbidden goods, cake and meat

And sliced fish, which *Pericles* was never deemed to deserve!

PAPHLAGON

You two will die right quick!

---

47. The MSS give this line to the Sausage-Seller, although the Budé and the OCT give it to Paphlagon.

48. The word for "stew" (*zōmeumata*) probably puns on *hupozōma,* "rope or timber used to strengthen the hull of a trireme." This suggestion is "as old as the scholia, but does not help" according to Neil (ad loc.).

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll shout three times louder than you!

PAPHLAGON

I'll bellow and outbellow you!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I'll shout and outshout you!

PAPHLAGON

I'll slander you, if you're elected general!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll beat your back like a dog's!

PAPHLAGON

I'll harass you with boasts!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll cut off your [escape] routes!

PAPHLAGON

Look at me without blinking!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I too was raised in the marketplace.

PAPHLAGON

I'll tear you to pieces, if you'll so much as grumble!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll cart you off like dung, if you'll chatter your nonsense!

PAPHLAGON

I admit that I steal. But you don't.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Yes I *do* admit it, by Hermes of the Marketplace![49]

PAPHLAGON

And I deny it with an oath, even when people are looking![50]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Well then, you use sophistic tricks that aren't your own![51]

PAPHLAGON

And I'll denounce you to the Prytaneis
For having sacred tripe belonging to the gods,
For which the tithe's not been paid!

CHORUS

O foul and loathsome shout-downer! With your boldness
The whole earth is full, the whole Assembly too,
So too fees and indictments and courtrooms, O
Mud-Disturber—the entire city of ours you've stirred up.
You've deafened our Athens with shouting,
As you watch from the rocks above for tuna-fish-shoals of tribute![52]

PAPHLAGON

I know where this affair was long ago stitched together!

---

49. Hermes was the god of trading, among other things (see *Acharnians* 816). A bronze statue of Hermes stood in the Athenian agora or marketplace.

50. The attribution of lines in this section is uncertain.

51. Or "that belong to others" (*allotria*); lying under oath is hardly a clever innovation.

52. Tuna fishermen would station someone on the rocks above the sea to watch for schools of tuna.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And if you don't know stitching together, then I don't know
sausage meats either!
You used to cut away the hide of lousy cattle and sell it,
Like a dirty crook, to rustic types, so it'd appear thick,
And after they wore it for less than a day, it'd be two
handbreadths bigger!

DEMOSTHENES

Yes, by Zeus, he did this very same thing to me, and so I prompted
Much ridicule from my demesmen and friends!
For before I got to Pergase,[53] I was swimming in my shoes!

CHORUS

So didn't you from the beginning make Shamelessness apparent,
Which alone, in fact, stands sentry for orators?
Trusting in it, you milk the fruit-bearing foreigners,
You're first in that, while Hippodamus's son[54] pines away as he
looks on.
Another man has appeared, much
More of a reprobate than you, and as a result I'm delighted!
He'll put a stop to you and outdo you, that's clear, on the spot,
In crookedness and boldness and duping-with-stupid-tricks!

53. The name of two demes or neighborhood districts (Upper and Lower Pergase) in Athens.

54. Hippodamus of Miletus was a noted town planner responsible for laying out Athens' port, the Piraeus (see, in general, Aristotle, *Politics* 2.8). His son, Archeptolemus, was apparently made an Athenian citizen; he may have somehow championed the cause of foreigners in Athens. In 411 he became active in the short-lived oligarchy in Athens and was subsequently executed. Archeptolemus is mentioned by name below, at 794.

[*To the Sausage-Seller*] But you who've been raised where men are such as they are,
Demonstrate now that being raised in a moderate way means nothing!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Just listen to what sort of citizen this guy is!

PAPHLAGON

You aren't going to let *me* [speak]?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

No, by Zeus, since I too am low-class!

DEMOSTHENES

And if he doesn't yield in this, say that you're also from low-class stock!

PAPHLAGON

You aren't going to let me?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

No, by Zeus!

PAPHLAGON

Yes, by Zeus!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

No, by Poseidon,
But I'll first do battle over this very thing—about who's the first to speak!

PAPHLAGON

Aah! I'm going to burst!!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And yet I won't let you.

DEMOSTHENES

Let him, let him—in the name of the gods!—let him burst himself!

PAPHLAGON

And what's persuaded you that you deserve to speak against me?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

That I can both speak and stir up something nice![55]

PAPHLAGON

Look at that: "speaking"! You'd do beautifully if a matter fell into your lap,
Raw and torn to pieces, you'd carry it out right fine!
But do you know what's happened to you, it seems to me? Just what happens to the multitude:
If somewhere you argued a little case well, pertaining to a resident alien foreigner,[56]
Then babbling and chattering away to yourself all night in the streets
And drinking [only] water and putting on a display and annoying your friends,
You began to suppose you're a capable speaker! You moron! What foolishness!

55. Literally, "make a *karukē* sauce," evidently composed of blood and spices (*karukopoiein*). Some suggest this means in context "cause agitation or confusion," others that it refers to flowery rhetoric.

56. Resident aliens (metics) were of course without rights of full citizenship.

SAUSAGE-SELLER[57]

And what do *you* drink so that you've now made the city
Silent, tongue-tied[58] by you and you alone?

PAPHLAGON

What human being do you compare me to? I'm one who,
Scarfing down hot tuna right away and then downing a pitcher of unmixed
Wine, I screw over the generals at Pylos!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I, gulping down cow's stomach and pig's tripe,
And then slurping up the gravy, with unwashed hands
I throttle the orators and stir up Nicias!

CHORUS[59]

The rest that you say I found pleasing, but one thing doesn't agree with me:
That you alone will drink down the gravy from the [political] affairs.

PAPHLAGON

But *you* won't eat up Milesian bass and then agitate-and-harass them![60]

---

57. Some editors give these lines to Demosthenes, against the principal MSS.

58. The word most commonly means "kissed with the tongue."

59. The MSS give these lines to the Chorus, but most editors give them instead to Demosthenes.

60. The precise meaning of this line is controversial. Miletus was a wealthy ally of Athens. Perhaps Cleon took a large bribe from Miletus but failed to deliver on his promise to it.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Having eaten ribs of beef, I'll buy [silver] mines!

PAPHLAGON

And having pounced on the Council, I'll stir it up violently!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I'll screw your butthole like a sausage casing!

PAPHLAGON

And I'll drag you outside by the butt, upside down!

DEMOSTHENES[61]

By Poseidon, then drag me out, too, if you do it to him!

PAPHLAGON

How I'll put you in stocks!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll prosecute you for cowardice!

PAPHLAGON

Your hide will be stretched on a tanner's board!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll skin you [and make] a thief's purse!

PAPHLAGON

I'll peg your hide to the ground!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll make mincemeat of you!

61. Most MSS give this line to Demosthenes, but some assign it to the Chorus.

PAPHLAGON

Your eyelashes I'll pluck out!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Your gullet I'll cut out!

DEMOSTHENES

And, by Zeus, we'll shove
A peg into his mouth, gourmet-style,
And then pulling out
His tongue from inside,
We'll examine him well and manfully,
Him and his gaping . . . butthole,
[To see] if he's diseased![62]

CHORUS

So there *was* something hotter than fire and
More shameless in the city than the speeches of the shameless!
And the matter at issue's no paltry thing,
Just attack and twist him, and do nothing small scale.
For now he's been seized round the middle!
If now you soften him up in the assault,
You'll discover him a coward—for I know his ways.

SAUSAGE-SELLER[63]

But despite being the sort of person he's been his whole life,
He was nonetheless held to be a real man, for reaping the
summer harvest of another.

---

62. Animals prepared for sacrifice had to be inspected for signs of disease or parasites.

63. Most MSS give these lines to the Sausage-Seller, but some editions (e.g., the Budé and the OCT) attribute them to Demosthenes.

And now those ears of corn that he brought back from there,
He's locked up in stocks and is drying out, and he wants to sell them.[64]

PAPHLAGON

I'm not afraid of you lot, while the Council is alive
And Demos sits there with a stupid look on his face.[65]

CHORUS

How shamelessly he acts before everyone and does not
Change his usual color!
If I don't hate you, would that I become a sheepskin blanket in Cratinus's house[66]
And be taught to sing in a tragedy by Morsimus![67]
O you who are concerned with everything, bearing on all affairs,
You alight on bribery-blooms.
Would that you spit out your mouthful as easily as you found it.
Only then would I sing,
"Drink, drink to the good times!"[68]
I suppose that the son of Oulius, too, the old man wheat-ogler,

64. An allusion to the Spartan prisoners captured by Demosthenes on the island of Sphacteria.

65. Or, perhaps, "And the demos sits there with a stupid look on its face."

66. A comic poet and Aristophanes' sometime competitor. "From habits of intemperance, the fleeces of the comic poet Cratinus, it appears, were not of the most delicate description" (Mitchell ad loc.).

67. A tragic poet also mocked in *Frogs* 151 and *Peace* 803 and following.

68. From a victory ode of the poet Simonides.

Delighting in the paean [to Apollo], would sing the Bacche-
bacchus![69]

PAPHLAGON

You won't outdo me in shamelessness, by Poseidon,
Or may I never be present for the sacrificial meats of Zeus of the
Marketplace!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

For my part—[I swear] by the knuckles that, many times for many
reasons,
I endured from childhood on, and the blows of little knives!—
I think I'll outdo you in these things, or otherwise it was for
nothing
That I've grown this big, eating scraps.

PAPHLAGON

Scraps, like a dog? O you thoroughly depraved fellow, how
then
Will you fight with a dogheaded baboon[70] while eating dog
food?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And by Zeus I've other tricks from when I was a boy,

---

69. Nothing certain is known of the man, and the reading of the MSS is questioned; perhaps Oulius (and not his son) is here referred to, who "was a son of the statesman Cimon and twin brother of the better-known Lacedaemonius" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.). The gods alluded to are Apollo and Dionysus.

70. The word for "baboon" in Greek is literally "doghead" (see, e.g., Plato, *Theaetetus* 161c5), "regarded as the fiercest of the simians" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.).

For I used to deceive the cooks by saying things like this:
"Examine it, boys, don't you see? Spring's here . . . there's a swallow!"
And they used to look, and in that much time I'd steal some meat!

CHORUS[71]

O Most Clever Flesh! Wisely did you foresee!
You stole, just like eating nettles before the swallows come.[72]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And got away with doing these things! But if one of them should see,
Then concealing it in my butt cheeks, I'd deny it on oath to the gods!
As a result, a man among the orators, seeing me do this, said:
"There's no way this boy won't govern the demos!"

CHORUS[73]

He reckoned that well! But it's clear what made him conclude that:
Because you swore a false oath after stealing, and had meat up your butthole!

PAPHLAGON

I'll put a stop to your boldness—of the both of you, I think!
For I'll go out and then swoop down on you like a keen and mighty wind,
Mixing up land and sea together pell-mell.

71. Some editions give these lines to Demosthenes, against the reading of the principal MSS.

72. Nettles were eaten in the spring, when they were still tender.

73. Some editions give these lines to Demosthenes, against the reading of the principal MSS.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll shorten sail with my sausages and then let myself drift
On the waves with a favorable wind, telling you to lament big-time!

CHORUS[74]

And as for me, if there's any leak, I'll guard the ship's hold!

PAPHLAGON

By Demeter, you won't get off, since you stole
Many talents[75] [of silver] from the Athenians!

CHORUS[76]

Look sharp, slacken the sheet!
This one's blowing a nor'easter and a sycophant-wind!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I know well that you've got ten talents from Potidaea![77]

PAPHLAGON

What of it? Want to take one of those talents and keep mum?

---

74. Some editions give this line to Demosthenes, against the reading of the principal MSS.

75. A talent was a measure of weight and came to represent the worth of that amount of silver or gold; see also *Acharnians* 6 and the accompanying note.

76. Some editions give these lines to Demosthenes, against the reading of the principal MSS.

77. In 430–429 B.C.E. Athens managed to recapture this rebel city, but only after a lengthy and hence costly siege. How Cleon might have benefited from Potidaea is unclear. Sommerstein speculates that Cleon might have "denounced the [Athenian] generals as having taken bribes *before* the capitulation, alleging that this was why they had not demanded unconditional surrender" (*Knights* ad loc.).

CHORUS[78]

The man would gladly take them! Slacken the ropes.
The wind is dying down.

PAPHLAGON

You'll be a defendant in four cases, at a hundred talents a piece.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And *you'll* face a charge of dodging military service, for twenty,
And one of theft, for more than a thousand.

PAPHLAGON

I contend that you're descended
From those who've offended the goddess![79]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I contend that your grandfather
Was among the bodyguards—

PAPHLAGON

What "bodyguards"?!?! Explain!

78. Some editions give these lines to Demosthenes, against the reading of the principal MSS.

79. An allusion to the charge that Sparta brought, in the run-up to the Peloponnesian War, according to which Athens must drive out those connected with the religious crime of killing supporters of a would-be tyrant (Cylon) who had sought refuge in a temple; those who had killed the suppliants were thus said to be cursed, and they included members of Pericles' family. The charge of religious pollution from long ago was dredged up to discredit Pericles, the leader of the war party in Athens. For the details, see Thucydides 1.126 and context.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Those of Hippias's wife, Leatherina![80]

PAPHLAGON

You're a stupid trickster!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

You're a dirty crook!

CHORUS[81]

Strike him courageously!

PAPHLAGON

Ow ow!
The conspirators are beating me!

CHORUS[82]

Strike him most courageously and
Punch him in the gut, and with your entrails
And intestines,
See to it that you punish[83] the man!
O Most Noble Flesh and Best in Soul of All!
Both for the city and for us citizens, you're a savior made manifest!
How well and with such complexity you trapped[84] him in speeches.

---

80. Hippias was the last tyrant of Athens, and so the charge is that Paphlagon is descended from someone supportive of tyranny. "Leatherina" is of course a made-up name meant to call to mind Paphlagon's ignoble profession; the name of Hippias's wife was actually Myrrine (see Thucydides 6.55).

81. Some editions give this line to Demosthenes.

82. Some editions give the first four lines here to Demosthenes.

83. The word for "punish" (*kolai*) echoes the word for "intestines" (*kolois*) in the previous line.

84. Instead of "trapped" (*hupēlthes*) some MSS read "attacked" (*epēlthes*).

How might we praise you commensurate with our pleasure?

PAPHLAGON

I was not unaware, by Demeter, that these affairs
Had been fabricated—instead I knew
They all were being nailed and glued together.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Well, I'm not unaware of the sorts of things you're carrying out in Argos.[85]
The pretext is that he's making Argives our friends,
But in private he's getting together there with the Lacedaemonians!

CHORUS[86]

Alas! Do you say nothing after the fashion of the wheelwright?[87]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And the reasons these things have been welded together,
I know: they're being forged on account of the prisoners![88]

CHORUS[89]

Well done, well done! "Forging" in return for "gluing"!

85. Argos was an important rival to Sparta for power, and its thirty-year treaty with Sparta was to expire in 421 (see Thucydides 5.14). Athenian politicians, including Cleon and Alcibiades, were eager to court Argos.

86. Some editions give this line to Demosthenes.

87. This line, which is omitted in one MS, follows 463 in the MSS, but all modern editors place it between 467 and 468, as in the translation above.

88. Another allusion to the Spartan prisoners captured on the island of Sphacteria.

89. Some editions give this line to Demosthenes.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And there are men from there,[90] in turn, hammering out
[the deal]!
[*To Paphlagon*] And you won't persuade me, either by giving me
silver or gold
Or by sending your friends for a visit,
Not to tell these things to the Athenians!

PAPHLAGON

Then I'll go immediately to the Council
And tell them of the conspiracies of you all!
And the nighttime gatherings in the city,
And all the deals you've made with the Medes and the King,[91]
And those cheesed-up affairs involving Boeotians![92]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

So what's cheese selling for among Boeotians?

PAPHLAGON

By Heracles, I'll lay your hide flat out!

[Exit Cleon]

CHORUS[93]

Come now, what thought do you have or what judgment?

---

90. That is, from Sparta.

91. That is, with the Persians and the King of Persia.

92. "The rich pastoral country of Boeotia was famous for its cheese" (Neil ad loc.). Around the time of the *Knights'* performance, Demosthenes was engaged in talks with the democratic faction among the Boeotians (Thucydides 4.76).

93. Some editions give these lines to Demosthenes, against the MSS.

You'll please inform us right now, if in fact you concealed
The meat in your butt cheeks, as you yourself say.
Run like a dart to the Council chamber,
Because he'll burst in there and slander
Us one and all and unleash his cries!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'm off! But first, on the spot, the tripe
And the cleavers I'll set down right here.

CHORUS[94]

Hold on now, anoint your neck with this,
So you can slip out of the slanders.[95]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

What you say's good, and that's just like a [wrestling] trainer!

CHORUS[96]

Hold on: take this and eat it up!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Why?

CHORUS[97]

So you may fight better, my lad, being garlic-primed![98]
Now quick, make haste!

---

94. Some editions give these lines to Demosthenes, against the MSS. The line attributions in this section are uncertain.

95. Wrestlers would anoint themselves with oil before a match.

96. Some editions give this line to Demosthenes, against the MSS.

97. Some editions give these lines to Demosthenes, against the MSS.

98. Cockfighters would feed garlic to their cocks to render them feisty for battle; see, e.g., Xenophon, *Symposium* 4.9 as well as *Acharnians* 166.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll do it!

CHORUS[99]

Now remember
To bite, to slander, to devour his cock's comb,
And see to it you'll come back having eaten his wattles!
Now be off and fare well, and would that you act
As I'd like,[100] and may you be guarded
By Zeus of the Marketplace. And once victorious
May you come back here again to us
Bedecked with wreaths!
[*To the audience*] But you, you apply your mind
To our anapests,
O you who are by yourselves already experienced
In all manner of Muse.
If some man, a comic producer, among the old-fashioned types
Compelled us [knights] to come before the audience to say lines,
He would not have easily attained it. But now the poet is deserving of it,
Because he hates the same people we do and dares to say the just things,
And in a well-born manner advances against the typhoon and the hurricane.
As for those things he says that many of you who've approached him wonder about

99. Some editions give the first three lines here to Demosthenes, against the MSS.

100. Literally, "according to my mind" (*kata noun*). These lines (498–99) are said to come from Sophocles.

And closely question him concerning—how it is that long ago he didn't ask for a chorus of his own—
He bade us explain this to you.[101] For the man asserts
That it was not through foolishness that he was so disposed as to delay, but rather his belief
That being a comic producer is the most difficult task of them all.
For though many indeed have attempted to woo Her, She has gratified few.[102]
And he recognized long ago that you are by nature given to frequent change,
And that you abandoned the previous poets as they aged.
He knows what happened to Magnes[103] as his gray hair descended,
He who had erected the most victory trophies over rival choruses:
Letting loose all kinds of sounds for you—plucking and flapping
And Lydianizing[104] and insect-buzzing and dyeing himself frog-green—
He didn't satisfy you, but in the end, in his old age (but not in his youth)
He was driven off stage as an elder, found wanting in the making of jokes.

101. For a consideration of the early career of Aristophanes, before he wrote and produced plays under his own name, consider Stephen Halliwell, "Aristophanes' Apprenticeship," *Classical Quarterly* 30:1 (1980): 33–45.

102. "She" here is presumably the Comic Muse.

103. Magnes was one of the two earliest comic poets in Athens. He is said to have won eleven victories at the City Dionysia, a record never surpassed (so far as we know).

104. Magnes produced a play called *The Lydians.*

Then [the poet] calls to mind Cratinus,[105] who once coursed
along with much praise
And flowed over the smooth plains, and, sweeping away oaks and
plane trees and enemies,
He used to carry them from their place, roots and all.
At a drinking party it wasn't possible to sing anything but
"Goddess Bribery, Figwood-Sandaled"[106]
And "Craftsmen of Ingenious Hymns."[107] Thus was he in his
bloom!
But now[108] you see him talking nonsense and you feel no pity for
him,
His tuning pegs fallen out and his tone no longer there,
His joints[109] all agape. But being an old man, he flows around,
Just like Connas,[110] wearing a dried-out wreath, perishing from
thirst,
He who, on account of his prior victories, ought to be drinking
[for free] in the Prytaneum,
Not chattering drivel but looking on [in the theater] alongside
Dionysus, and lauded.

---

105. Together with Aristophanes and Eupolis, Cratinus was held to be among the greatest comic poets of Athens, winning six first-place victories at the City Dionysia.

106. Apparently the beginning of one of his choral odes. The first syllable of the word for "figwood-sandaled" (*sukopedile*) suggests "sycophant."

107. According to the scholiast, this ode was found in Cratinus's *Euneidae.*

108. Cratinus was competing against Aristophanes in the same festival in 424; his *Satyrs* would win second place, behind the *Knights.*

109. The same word (*harmoniōn*) can mean (musical) "harmony." It seems that Cratinus is being compared to a worn-out lyre.

110. A flute (*aulos*) player apparently reduced to poverty after enjoying much success.

And Crates[111] used to endure such a temper and abuse from you,
He who, from little expense, used to send you off with a meal,
Kneading together most urbane thoughts from his most clarion-like mouth.
And yet he on his own persisted, sometimes stumbling, sometimes not.
Dreading these things, [the poet] was always delaying; and in addition to these considerations he claimed
That he ought to become a rower first before taking the rudder in hand,
And from there exercise command at the bow and closely examine the winds,
And *then* pilot for himself. For all these reasons, then,
Because he leapt in sensibly and not thoughtlessly, spouting nonsense,
Raise a great round of applause for him, and send him forth with an eleven-oar salute,[112]
A fine, Lenaean clamor
So the poet may go off gratified,
Having acted agreeably,[113]
Beaming with a glistening . . . forehead.[114]

111. An Athenian comic poet said to have won three victories at the City Dionysia.

112. "The eleven figure has not been explained. Is there any chance that this numeral had a special significance?" (Wilson ad loc.). Consider Marcel Lysgaard Lech, "The Knights' Eleven Oars: In Praise of Phormio? Aristophanes' *Knights* 546–7," *Classical Journal* 105:1 (2009): 19–26.

113. More literally, "according to [our] mind" (*kata noun*); see also n. 104 above.

114. Aristophanes was bald at a young age.

Lord of Horses, Poseidon, pleased by
The din of brazen-hooved horses
And their neighing
And by triremes glossy-dark-hulled, swift,
Payload-bearing,[115]
And by contests of youths distinguishing themselves in chariots
Or brought low by unhappy fortune:
Come here to the chorus, You of the golden trident,
O guardian of dolphins, worshipped at Sounion,
You who are honored at Geraestus,[116] son of Cronus,
To Phormio[117] and to the Athenians at present,
Dearest above the other gods!
We want to speak in praise of our fathers, because
They were men worthy of this land and the Robe,[118]
Men who, in infantry battles and on naval campaign,
Were always victorious everywhere and so adorned this city.
For no one among them, on seeing their opponents,
Ever counted them up—rather his spirit was immediately at the ready.
But if somewhere they should fall on their shoulder in some battle,

115. "These are the triremes that brought the annual tribute from the Athenian allies, which became the pay of the rowers and juries," that is, of the poor; Edmunds, *Cleon, "Knights," and Aristophanes' Politics*, 39.

116. Sounion was located in southern Attica, Geraestus in the southern part of Euboea, and Poseidon was worshipped at both.

117. An outstanding commander in the Athenian navy early on in the Peloponnesian War.

118. The ceremonial robe (*peplos*) presented to Athena in the course of the Panathenaea festival.

This they'd wipe off, deny they had fallen,
And get back to the wrestling match once again. And not even one general
Of previous times would have begged and asked Cleaenetus[119] for public sustenance.
But as things stand now, if they don't have front-row seats and [free] meals,
They assert they won't fight! But we deem it right that we nobly defend
The city and the native gods, as a gift given without recompense.
We ask for nothing more save this much alone—
If ever there is peace and we cease our toils,
Don't begrudge us our long hair or our personal grooming devices![120]
O Pallas,[121] city defender,
Guardian of the most sacred land of quite all,
Surpassing in
War and poets and power:
Come, draw near, bringing our fellow worker
In campaigns and battles,
Nike, who, companion of choruses,
Stands together with us in opposition to the enemies.
Now come, here appear. For
On these men you ought to bestow victory
By every art,

119. Father of Cleon.

120. Long hair was a mark, among young men especially, of aristocratic airs; see also *Wasps* 1317.

121. That is, Athena.

Now if ever before!
We want to praise our horses on points we can testify to.[122]
And they deserve to be spoken well of, for many troubles
They've borne with us to the end—incursions and battles.
But we do not admire them as much on land,
As when they leapt manfully onto horse-transport ships,
Purchasing drinking cups, others also garlic and onion.
Then grasping the oar handle just as we mortals do,
They set to pulling hard and neighed nice and loud,
"Hippapai![123] Who'll put their shoulder to it?
Must take better hold! What're we doing? You aren't pulling,
S-brand!"
They then leapt out at Corinth. The youngest
Made dugouts with their hooves and went to fetch blankets.[124]
They ate crabs instead of Medean grass,
If a crab should crawl out toward them, and they also hunted
them from the depth of the sea.
Theorus[125] said as a result that a Corinthian crab said:
"It's a terrible thing, Poseidon, if I won't be able, even in the depth,
Either on land or at sea, to flee the horses!"

[*Sausage-Seller returns*]

---

122. Consider in this regard Nicias's recent victory over the Corinthians at Solygeia, where two hundred cavalry were brought by transport ships (Thucydides 4.42–44).

123. The equine equivalent of the (human) sailors' cry, *rhuppapai!* (consider *Wasps* 909 and *Frogs* 1073).

124. One MS reads, instead of "blankets" (or "bedding": *strōmata*), "food" or "fodder" (*brōmata*), perhaps rightly.

125. Presumably the associate of Cleon's attacked elsewhere by Aristophanes; see *Acharnians* 134 and following.

CHORUS

O Dearest of Men and Most Youthfully Vigorous!
How much worry you gave us while you were gone!
And now that you've come back again safe and sound,
Report to us how you did in contending the matter!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

What else other than that I became "Nicoboulus"![126]

CHORUS

Now *that* deserves a joyful shout from everyone!
O you who speak nobly, and carried out deeds much better still
Than the speeches,
Would that you might recount each and every point to me clearly.
I think that I'd
Traverse a long road
To hear it! For these reasons,
Best fellow, be bold and speak, since
We are all of us delighted by you!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And indeed it *is* worthwhile to hear of what happened!
I sped off from here immediately, right behind him.
He was inside [the Council], breaking forth with thunder-hurling words.
He hurled astounding things against the Knights,
Hurling mountains of bombast and saying, very persuasively, that they're conspirators.
The whole Council was listening

126. That is, Victor-in-the-Council.

And became full of false-orach[127] because of him,
And they took on a mustardy look and knitted together their brows.
And for my part, when I knew they were accepting his arguments
And being completely fooled by his bogus baloney,
I said, "Come now, Friskies and Fakers,
Knuckleheads and Imps and Impudent Ones,[128]
And Marketplace, where as a boy I was educated,
Let boldness be mine now and grant me a resourceful tongue
And a shameless voice!" As I was thinking on these things,
On the right[129] side a bugger of a man let out a fart!
And so I made obeisance. Then striking with my butt
The entry gate I broke it and, my mug gaping wide,
I cried out: "O Council, bearing a good word,[130]
I want to be the first to report the good news to you.
For from the time when the war first broke out for us,
Never have I seen sprats be a better deal!"
Right away their faces grew quite calm,
Then they crowned me with a wreath for my good news. And I at once told them,

---

127. "The herb orach was thought to make the face grow pale . . . : the councilors are so alarmed by the alleged conspiracy that they go pale" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad 629–30); the term "false-orach" (*pseudoatraphaxus*) suggests that there is no conspiracy in fact.

128. The meanings of most of the names the Sausage-Seller here calls on or invokes, as his special deities, are somewhat uncertain, although the gist seems clear.

129. The right side is always auspicious; the left, foreboding and "sinister." An eagle soaring on the right side is a very good sign (see, e.g., Xenophon, *The Education of Cyrus* 2.1.1).

130. Literally, "good speeches."

Making it a secret not to be repeated,
That in order to buy many sprats for an obol,
They must seize the bowls of the craftsmen.
They applauded and were all agape at me.
But *he* suspected, Paphlagon did, knowing
What phrases especially please the Council,
And so he stated his judgment: "Men, it seems best to me now
In light of the good turn of events just announced,
To sacrifice, for the good news, one hundred bulls to the goddess."[131]
The Council then nodded their head in his direction once again.
And for my part, when I knew I was being defeated by bull crap,
I overshot him with *two* hundred bulls!
And to [Artemis] the Wild One I advised them to make a vow
Of one thousand goats tomorrow,[132]
If anchovies should become a hundred an obol.
The Council then looked eagerly at me again.
But when he heard these things, he was dumbstruck and began to babble.
Then the Prytaneis and the police started to drag him off,
And the others got to their feet and began shouting about sprats.

131. That is, to Athena.

132. Prior to the battle of Marathon, the Greeks vowed to sacrifice to Artemis the same number of goats as of the Persians they might kill in battle. In the event, the number of Persian dead was so high that the Greeks chose instead to sacrifice five hundred goats a year to Artemis, a practice that continued down to Xenophon's day (*Anabasis of Cyrus* 3.2.12). Thus the Sausage-Seller suggests sacrificing one thousand goats in thanks for . . . cheap anchovies!

He was pleading with them to let him stay for a little while longer,
saying,
"So that you might learn what the herald from Lacedaemon is
saying—
For he's come concerning the treaty!"
But they *all,* with one voice, cried out:
"*Now?!?* About a treaty?!? Yeah right: only once, sir,
They learned that sprats are a bargain here with us!
We don't need a treaty! Let the war creep on!"
And they cried out to have the Prytaneis adjourn.
Then they leapt over the railings everywhere.
But I outran them and bought up the coriander
And all the onions there were in the marketplace.
Then I gave them out, gratis, as seasonings for the sprats
When they had no way of getting any, and I gratified them!
They all of them highly praised and acclaimed me
So much so that, as a result,
I've come back with the entire Council in the palm of my hand—
for an obol's worth of coriander!

CHORUS

Well, you've done all the sorts of things a fortunate fellow should!
And that dirty crook found another fellow who surpasses him by far
In greater crookedness
And complicated snares
And wheedling words.
Just reflect on how you'll best contend
In what remains.
But that you have in us well-disposed allies,
This you've long known.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And here's Paphlagon approaching,
Pushing along a cresting wave and stirring and mixing things up,
Like he's going to swallow me up! Mormo,[133] what boldness!

PAPHLAGON

Should I fail to destroy you, if I've still got some of the same lies
Within me—I'd fall to pieces entirely!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

[*Dancing in delight*] I'm pleased by your threats—laughing at your thunderous talk,
Dancing a crazy jig, crying "cuckoo" all round!

PAPHLAGON

By Demeter, I'll no longer go on living
If I don't devour you from this earth!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

If you don't devour?!? And [I won't go on living either] if I don't guzzle you down,
Even if, by swallowing you up, I myself may burst!

PAPHLAGON

I'll destroy you, [I swear,] by the front-row seat I got as a result of Pylos![134]

133. A terrifying she-monster invoked to frighten children; see also *Acharnians* 582.

134. Yet another reference to Pylos, the locale of Demosthenes' greatest military triumph, for which Cleon claimed credit. Free meals in the Prytaneum and front-row seats in the theater were evidently among Cleon's rewards; see also 575 above.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

"Front-row seat" my foot! How I'll look at you
When I'm seated in your front-row seat, as you watch from the very back!

PAPHLAGON

I'll put you in stocks, by the heaven!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

How sharp-spirited! Come now, what may I give you to eat?
What would you most delight in eating? A . . . wallet?

PAPHLAGON

I'll tear your guts out with my fingernails!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll scratch out your [free] meals at the Prytaneum!

PAPHLAGON

I'll drag you before Demos[135] so you can pay me the just penalty!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I'll drag you and slander you more!

PAPHLAGON

But he won't be persuaded by *you* in anything, you bastard.
Whereas *I* can ridicule him as much as I want!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

How strongly you believe Demos is yours!

---

135. Or "the demos," i.e., the Athenian majority; Paphlagon does not always observe the conceit that Demos is an individual (see, e.g., 764 below).

PAPHLAGON

For I know the tidbits of food he's hand-fed.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

So then you feed him badly, just like nannies!
You feed him a little after you've chewed it,
While you yourself gulp down three times as much!

PAPHLAGON

And, by Zeus, through my cleverness
I'm able to make Demos expand and contract.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Even my butthole knows *that* sophistic trick!

PAPHLAGON

No, good fellow, you won't gain the reputation of treating me insolently in the Council.
Let's go before Demos.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Nothing's preventing it.
See—walk on! Let nothing keep us!

PAPHLAGON

O Demos, come out here!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Yes, by Zeus, O Father!
Do come out, darling Demos, dearest one!

PAPHLAGON

Come out, so you may know the sorts of outrageous insolence I suffer!

DEMOS

Who's shouting? Won't you get away from my door?!
[*Demos comes out of his house*] You've shredded my harvest-wreath![136]
Who, Paphlagon, is doing you an injustice?

PAPHLAGON

On your account I'm being beaten
By this guy here and the youths![137]

DEMOS

Why?

PAPHLAGON

Because I am your friend, O Demos, and because I am your lover.

DEMOS

[*Turning to Sausage-Seller*] And who indeed are you?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

This guy's rival in love!
I've loved you for a long time and want to benefit you,
As do many others, those who are noble and good gentlemen!
But we aren't able to do so, on account of *this* guy! For you
Are like boys who are the objects of love:
You don't accept those who are noble and good gentlemen
But give yourself to lamp-sellers[138] and shoe menders
And leatherworkers and hide-sellers.

136. A wreath hung on the front door in honor of Apollo every autumn.

137. That is, by the Knights, who would all be young men (consider 270 above).

138. Perhaps a reference to Hyperbolus, successor to Cleon as demagogue; see 1300–1315 below.

PAPHLAGON

For I benefit Demos!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Tell me, by doing what?

PAPHLAGON

What, you ask? I slipped in before the generals from Pylos,[139]
Having sailed there, and then led back the Laconians.[140]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I, while walking around, from a shop
I seized a pot that somebody else had on the boil!

PAPHLAGON

Convene an Assembly right now,
O Demos, so you may know which one of us
Is better disposed to you, and decide it, so you may befriend him.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Yes, yes, decide indeed—just not on the Pnyx.

DEMOS

I wouldn't take up a seat in another place!
Just go on! Presence at the Pnyx required!

139. The text of this line is uncertain ("extremely difficult": Wilson ad loc.). If the plural is to be read, with the majority of the MSS, Paphlagon would seem to have in mind not only Demosthenes but also Eurymedon and Sophocles, who were also serving as generals.

140. That is, the Spartan prisoners captured on Sphacteria, just off the coast of Pylos.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

[*Aside*] Ah, wretched me, I'm a goner! For the old man
At home is the cleverest of men,
But whenever he sits on this rock here,
He gapes like a chewer of dried figs!

CHORUS

Now indeed you must let go all your own reefing rope
And bring an impetuous will and inescapable arguments,
With which you'll overthrow him. For the man is complex,
And from unmanageable circumstances he's good at managing to find ready resources.
So see to it that you'll unleash a great and keen [wind] against him!
But be on guard and, before he presses you hard, you first
Raise your dolphins[141] aloft and bring your boat alongside.

PAPHLAGON

[*Aside*] To Mistress Athena, Guardian of the city,
I pray that if, when it comes to the Athenian demos, I've been
The best of men (after Lysicles and Cynna and Salabaccho),[142]
Then I may dine in the Prytaneum, just as I do now, having done nothing for it.
[*To Demos*] But if I hate you and am not the sole person who stands firm in battling on your behalf,
May I perish and be sawn apart and cut up into leather straps!

141. Pieces of iron or other metal suspended from a ship and used as a weapon against other vessels as they drew near; see, e.g., Thucydides 7.41.

142. For Lysicles, see n. 25 above. Cynna and Salabaccho were courtesans.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I, O Demos, if I'm not a friend and don't feel affection for you, then may I be cut up

And boiled in mincemeat! And if you're not persuaded by these things,

May I be grated on this [table] here for the savory stew with cheese,

And may I be dragged by the balls with a meat hook to Cerameicus![143]

PAPHLAGON

And how could there be a citizen, O Demos, who feels more friendship for you than I do?

First off, when I was on the Council, I made the most money for you

In the common account, by putting some people to the rack, squeezing others, demanding a cut from still others,

Not giving a thought to any private person, if I could gratify you!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

That, O Demos, is nothing grand, for I too will do this for you.

Snatching up the bread of others, I'll give it over to you.

I'll teach this very thing to you first—that he isn't your friend or well disposed,

Except for this reason, that he enjoys your fire.

For you fought to the end for the land against the Medes at Marathon

And in victory you gave over to us much to talk loudly of,

But he gives no thought to you seated here on such hard rocks—

143. The principal cemetery in Athens.

Unlike me, who bring you this that I've sewed [*holds up a cushion*].
Just sit up
And then sit down gently, so you don't chafe what was at Salamis.[144]

DEMOS

Fellow,[145] who are you? Surely you're not someone born of that illustrious line of Harmodius,[146] are you?
At any rate, this deed of yours truly is well-born and demos-friendly!

PAPHLAGON

From such small little bits of flattery, you've come to be [seen as] well disposed toward him!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And you got your hooks into him with much smaller bait than this!

PAPHLAGON

Well, if some man has appeared somewhere who defends Demos more
Or who is a better friend to you than I am—I'm willing to stake my head!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And how are you his friend, you who, though you see him living in casks

144. Site of the great Athenian naval victory over the Persians in 480.

145. Literally, "Human being."

146. Harmodius, together with Aristogeiton, was popularly credited with the assassination of Hipparchus, son of Peisistratus, and so with bringing to an end the rule of tyranny in Athens.

And crannies and little towers, for seven years now,[147] you feel no pity,
But instead you've locked him in and take the honey? And when Archeptolemus[148] brought
Peace, you scattered it to the winds, and when it comes to the embassies
Proposing a treaty, you drive them out of the city with a slap on the backside!

PAPHLAGON

[Yes,] so he may rule all Greeks! For it's in the oracles
That he must at some point sit in court in Arcadia[149] for five obols a day,
If he is patient. At all events *I* will nourish and tend to him
By discovering sources, good or foul, from which he'll have his three obols.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

No, by Zeus, you aren't planning so that he may rule Arcadia, but so that
You may snatch up more and take bribes from the [subject] cities, and so that Demos
Not catch sight of you, on account of the war and its fog, as you do your crooked things,
But instead so he'll stand gaping before you, through necessity together with need and [the prospect of] pay.

147. Pericles' war strategy required the rural folk of Athens to abandon their land to the depredations of the Spartans and come to live in cramped quarters in the city proper; see also *Acharnians* 71.

148. An Athenian politician and son of Hippodamus; see 327 above.

149. That is, in the central part of the Peloponnese.

And if ever he goes back to the fields and spends his days at peace,
And regains his spirit by eating groats and chatting with olive-cake,
He'll know the sorts of goods you swindled him out of, by way of a public wage.[150]
Then he, a fierce rustic fellow, will come to you and track down a ballot against you.
Knowing this, you utterly deceive him and dream dreams about yourself.[151]

PAPHLAGON

Isn't it terrible that you say these things about me and slander me
Before the Athenians and Demos, when I've done far more useful things
For the city—yes, by Demeter—than Themistocles[152] ever did!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

"O City of Argos! Hearken to the sorts of things he says!"[153] You measure yourself against *Themistocles?!?*
Finding our city not quite full, he filled it right to the brim.

---

150. Thucydides suggests that Cleon was so adamantly in favor of war because "he thought that in peaceful times he would become more apparent as an evildoer and his slanders would be less trusted" (Thucydides 5.16).

151. The reading of the principal MSS. Most modern editors read, instead of "about yourself," "about him," taking the verb to mean "cheat or deceive by dreams."

152. See n. 18 above.

153. A fragment from Euripides' lost *Telephus*.

And, in addition to this, while the city was feasting midday, he kneaded the Piraeus[154] as well,
And though removing none of the old fish, he added new ones.
But you sought to make Athenians appear to be micro-citizens
By building walls and reciting oracles, you who measure yourself against Themistocles!
And he's exiled from the land, while you wipe your hands on Achilles' [cake].[155]

PAPHLAGON

Isn't it terrible, O Demos, for me to hear these things from him,
Just because I feel friendly affection for you?

DEMOS

Stop, you, and don't utter foul abuse!
For much too much time now your underhanded dealings have gone undetected!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

It's the bloodiest bastard, O dearest little Demos, who's done the crookedest misdeeds!
When you stand agape,
He breaks off the stalks of officials undergoing an audit[156]

154. Athens' port, whose fortification was completed at Themistocles' urging; see also 884–85 as well as Thucydides 1.93.

155. A cake or bread made from fine barley and served in the Prytaneum. As a result of Pylos, Cleon was awarded free meals in the Prytaneum; see also 1404–5 below.

156. Public officials were subject to being audited upon completion of their service. The suggestion is that Paphlagon takes bribes ("stalks") from public officials on the promise that he will not harass them during their audits.

And gulps them down, and with both hands
He sops his bread in the public funds!

PAPHLAGON

You won't be so gratified: I'll
Convict you, for you're stealing
Thirty thousand!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Why strike your oar on the sea and splash about,
Since you're the bloodiest bastard when it comes to
The Athenian demos? And I'll show,
By Demeter—or may I not go on living—
That you took as bribes from Mytilene[157]
More than forty minas!

CHORUS

O you who are manifest as the greatest benefit to all human beings,
I envy you the readiness of your tongue! For if you press on like this,
You'll be the greatest of Greeks, and you alone will be master
Of the city's allies and rule them while holding a trident,[158]

---

157. The nature of the alleged bribe is not certain, although one account has it that "a bribe of ten talents was given to Cleon by Lesbians [i.e., citizens of Lesbos] resident in Athens" (Neil ad loc.). Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, attempted to revolt from Athens in 428. The attempt failed badly, however, and aroused the ire of the Athenians. Thucydides presents the debate between Cleon—who argued for sticking to the previous day's resolution to kill all the men and enslave all the women and children—and Diodotus—who argued for what might be called greater leniency (3.36–49). See the appendix for a translation of Cleon's speech; at 3.38.2 Cleon insinuates that his opponent has taken bribes.

158. The Chorus is thus comparing the Sausage-Seller to Poseidon; see also 559–64 above.

With which you'll make much money by shaking and stirring things up!
And don't let the man go, since he's given you a handhold,
For you'll easily finish him off, with a chest like yours!

PAPHLAGON

No, good men, things are not yet that way, no, by Poseidon!
For such is the deed I've done that
I put a bit in the mouth of my enemies all at once,
So long as something remains of the shields from Pylos!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Hold on—those shields!—you've given *me* a handhold!
For if in fact you're a friend to Demos, you shouldn't have knowingly let
These [shields] be hung up with their handles [still on].[159]
But this, Demos, is a trick so that, if you want
To punish this man here, it won't be allowed you to do it.
For you see the sort of gang of young leather-sellers he has,
And dwelling around them are honey-sellers
And cheese-sellers. This gang has put their heads together for one thing:
So that if you should snort with anger and look toward ostraca,[160]
Then at night they might snatch down those shields and, at a run,
Seize the entry points for our barley!

159. The handles or armbands would normally be removed so that the shields could not be used—by slaves, for example—when in storage.

160. Shards of pottery used to record votes for "ostracizing" or banishing a citizen for a set time. Thus Sausage-Seller here refers to the possibility that Demos might wish to banish Cleon from Athens.

DEMOS

Ah, wretched me! They have handles?! [*To Paphlagon*] You dirty crook,
For such a long time you've been swindling me, cheating Demos in such things!

PAPHLAGON

Amazing fellow,[161] don't believe what's being said, or suppose
That you'll ever find a better friend than I am, I who, though one individual,
Put a stop to the conspirators, and nothing in the city
That's been contrived has escaped my notice, but instead I've immediately cried out about it!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Which is just what happens to eel hunters:
Whenever the lake is calm, they gain nothing.
But if they stir the mud up and down,
They do catch something. And you too gain, if you mix up the city!
Just tell me this much, this one thing: selling so many hides as you do,
Have you ever given him leatherwork for his shoes from your own supply,
When you claim that you are his friend?

DEMOS

No indeed, by Apollo!

161. Literally, "O daemonic one" (*daimonie*), often said of one who has uttered something amazing—or crazy.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

So have you recognized by now what he's like? But me,
I bought for myself this pair of shoes here, and I give them to you to wear!

DEMOS

I judge you, of all those I know, to be the best man when it comes to Demos
And best disposed to the city and to my toes!

PAPHLAGON

Now isn't it terrible that shoes are able to do so much,
But you have no recollection of all the things I've done for you?
I put a stop to the buggers by removing Gryttus[162] [from the citizen roll]!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Well isn't it terrible that you keep a watch over buttholes
And put a stop to the buggers? And there's no way that you
Didn't put a stop to them out of envy—so they'd not become orators!
And though you see this fellow here without a cloak, at such an age,
You've never yet thought it worthwhile to clothe Demos,
Though it's winter. But I give him *this.* [*Hands him a garment*]

DEMOS

This sort of thing Themistocles never thought of!
Though that Piraeus thing[163] too was wise, and yet to me at least

162. Otherwise unknown. One source reads "Grypus."

163. See 815 above and the accompanying note.

It doesn't appear to be a greater invention than the cloak!

PAPHLAGON

Ah . . . wretched me . . . Such monkey-shenanigans you're harassing me with!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

No, but I'm making use of ways that are *yours,* just as a man who's drinking, when he wants to take a crap,
Uses another's slippers!

PAPHLAGON

But you won't outstrip me in flatteries. For I
Will clothe him in *this,* but you'll be saying "alas!" you bastard!

DEMOS

Yuck!
Won't you perish?!? To the crows with your very evil smelling hide!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And yet he put this around you for that express purpose, so he'd suffocate you!
In fact he plotted this against you before, too! You know that
Silphium stalk,[164] when it was a good price?

DEMOS

I know it indeed.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

This guy on purpose went to great lengths to make it cheap

164. A now-extinct plant used widely in cooking and medicine.

So that people would buy it and eat it, and then in court
The jurors would fart and kill one another!

DEMOS

Yes, by Poseidon, and a man from Dungsville told me that too!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Didn't you then fart yourselves brown?

DEMOS

Yes, by Zeus, that was a clever contrivance of Pyrrander![165]

PAPHLAGON

With such stupid tricks, you bastard, you're stirring things up
for me!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

For the goddess ordered me to win a victory over you, by means
of boasts!

PAPHLAGON

But you *won't* win! [*To Demos*] For I assert I'll supply you,
O Demos, with three obols to gulp down as pay for doing nothing!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

But I give you a little jar and some medicine
To smear on the little sores on your shins!

PAPHLAGON

And I'll make you young by picking out your gray hairs!

165. Although the name is attested, its main purpose here is to pun on the same word translated in the previous line by "brown" (yellow or yellowish brown, more precisely: *purroi*); hence a man (*-ander*) of that color.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Here, take this rabbit's tail and wipe around your little eyes
with it.

PAPHLAGON

Wipe your nose, O Demos, and then wipe it off on my head!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

On mine!

PAPHLAGON

On mine!
[*To the Sausage-Seller*] I'll make you commander of a trireme,
spending
Your own money, with an ancient ship,
Which you'll never stop spending on and rebuilding![166]
And I'll contrive it that
You get a rotten sail!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

The man's at a boil—stop, stop!—
He's boiling over! You've got to take out some of the kindling
under there
And draw off the threats with this! [*Holds up a ladle*]

PAPHLAGON

You'll pay me a beautiful penalty,
Hard pressed by levies.[167]

---

166. It fell to wealthy citizens to pay for public works, including the outfitting and maintenance of triremes or warships—an expensive duty.

167. That is, taxes or levies raised by Athens to pay for the war.

For I'll bring it about
That you're enrolled among the rich!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll threaten nothing,
But I pray for these things for you:
Your fry pan of squid is
Set out and sizzling, but you
Are about to render your judgment [in the Assembly] about
The Milesians, and make as a profit
A talent, if you can pull it off.[168]
Hurrying to fill yourself full of squid
So you might still get to the Assembly in time,
Then the man comes for you before you've eaten,
And, wanting to get that talent,
You choke [on the squid] as you're eating it!

CHORUS

Well done, by Zeus and Apollo and Demeter!

DEMOS

That's my opinion as well! And in other respects, too, it's plain
He's a good citizen to the obol-many, such as no man has been
For a long time.
But you, Paphlagon, though you claim to be my friend, you just feed me garlic.
And now take off your ring, since
You'll no longer be my steward.

168. See also 361 above for another reference to the Milesians, although here as there the precise nature of the profit is unclear.

PAPHLAGON

Hold on! Know this much, that
If you won't allow me to oversee things, another, in turn,
More crooked than I am, will appear.

DEMOS

There's no way that this ring here
Is mine. At any rate, the signet appears different.
[*Showing it to the Sausage-Seller*] Am I just not seeing it?!?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Let's see . . . what was your signet?

DEMOS

Cow's fat wrapped in a fig leaf that's been well baked.[169]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

It isn't there.

DEMOS

Not the fig leaf? What is it then?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

A seagull all agape, haranguing[170] (the) Demos on the rocks.

DEMOS

Ah, wretched me!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

What is it?!?

---

169. The word for "fat" differs only in accent from that for "demos."
170. The word is *dēmēgorōn,* related to "demagogue."

DEMOS

Take it away!
He didn't have mine, but Cleonymus's![171]
[*To the Sausage-Seller*] Take this one here from me and be my steward!

PAPHLAGON

No, not *yet,* Master, I beseech you!
Not before you hear the oracles I have!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And mine too now!

PAPHLAGON

But if you're persuaded by this guy,
You'll have to become a wineskin![172]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And if you're persuaded by *this* guy,
Your foreskin will be pulled back right to the shaft!

PAPHLAGON

But [the oracles] say to me that you must rule
Over quite all the land, crowned with roses!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

While mine, in turn, say that, wearing an embroidered purple robe

171. A minor Athenian politician routinely lampooned by Aristophanes for both his gluttony (*Acharnians* 88) and his cowardice; see also 1290–99 below.

172. Presumably this means that he'll be flayed alive. There may also be an allusion here to a famous oracle pertaining to Athens, according to which the city might be tossed about but, like a wineskin, it would never sink.

And a wreath on a golden chariot,
You'll pursue[173] Smicythe[174] and the master of the house!

DEMOS

[*To the Sausage-Seller*] Well, go and bring them, so this fellow here
May hear them.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Certainly!

DEMOS

And you, you bring yours now too.

PAPHLAGON

Okay.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Okay, by Zeus! Nothing prevents it!

[*Exit both the Sausage-Seller and Paphlagon*]

CHORUS

Most pleasant will be the light of day
For those here present and
For those who here arrive,
If Cleon perishes.
Yet there were certain
Quite troublesome elders
In the bazaar of the courts
I heard gainsaying this—

173. The verb can also mean "prosecute."

174. Identity uncertain. Some suggest that this feminine name may make fun of an effeminate man actually named Smicythus.

On the grounds that if he had not become great
In the city, there'd never have been
Those two useful implements:
A pestle and a ladle.
But I for my part also wonder at this,
At the swinishness of his Music education.
For the boys who went to school
With him assert that
Often he would tune his lyre
Only to the Dorian[175] mode
And that he was unwilling to learn another.
And then the cithara teacher,
In his anger, ordered him to be led away
On the grounds that "this boy is incapable of learning
Anything except the Dorian!"

PAPHLAGON

There, look! And I'm not even bringing them *all* out!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

[*Carrying a heavy load*] Oh boy, how I want to take a crap! And I'm not even bringing them *all* out!

DEMOS

What are these here?

175. Spartans were Dorians and not known for their refined education in or appreciation of the things of the Muses. Consider Aristotle, *Politics* 1342b13–14, where he recommends that younger people learn the Dorian mode—at least with a view to inculcating steadfastness and courage.

PAPHLAGON

Prophecies.

DEMOS

All of these?!

PAPHLAGON

Are you amazed?

Yes, by Zeus, and I have a chest full of still more!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I've got an attic and two lean-tos full!

DEMOS

Come now, whose oracles are these?

PAPHLAGON

Mine are from Bacis.

DEMOS

And whose are yours?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

They're Glanis's,[176] the older brother of Bacis.

DEMOS

[*To Paphlagon*] And what are they about?

PAPHLAGON

About Athens, about Pylos,
About you, about me, about *all* matters!

176. A made-up name.

DEMOS

And what are *yours* about?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

About Athens, about lentil stew,
About Lacedaemonians, about fresh mackerel,
About those who do a bad job of measuring out barley in the marketplace,
About you, about me—[*gesturing to Paphlagon*] this guy, he can bite the dick!

DEMOS

Well now, see that you read them to me,
In particular that one about me, which pleases me—
That I'll become an "eagle in the clouds."[177]

PAPHLAGON

Just listen, now, and pay heed to me.
"Show forth, Son of Erechtheus,[178] the path of the prophecies that Apollo
Proclaimed to you from the innermost sanctuary through his much-prized tripods.
He bade you to keep safe the sacred, saw-toothed dog,
Who is open-jawed before you and barks frighteningly in your behalf

177. The oracle has been preserved in the scholium to this passage:

"Happy city of Athena, driver of spoils,
Having seen many things and suffered many things and toiled over many things,
An eagle in the clouds will it become for all the days."

See also *Birds* 978.

178. The name of an early king of Athens.

And will supply you with pay. And if he[179] should not do so, he'll perish.
For many jackdaws croak in hatred against him."

DEMOS

As for these things, by Demeter, I don't know what they mean!
For what's with Erechtheus and jackdaws and a dog?

PAPHLAGON

Well, I am the dog, since I speak in your interest.
And Phoebus [Apollo] says to you to keep me safe, the dog.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

The oracle doesn't say this. But this dog here
Gnaws away at your oracles as if they were doors.[180]
My [reading] is the correct one when it comes to this dog.

DEMOS

You now have your say. But first I'll get a stone
So the oracle about the dog doesn't bite me!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

"Take heed,[181] son of Erechtheus, of Cerberus,[182] a slave-dealing dog,

179. The Budé reads, "if you should not do so," but without evident MS support.

180. The Budé follows the suggestion of a modern scholar and reads, instead of "doors" (*thuras*) with the MSS, "porridge" (*atharēs*). Wilson (ad loc.) defends the reading of the MSS.

181. The Sausage-Seller's prophecy begins with the same word (*phradzeu*), as does Paphlagon's at 1015; the word has a range of meanings.

182. The terrifying, multiheaded guard dog in Hades; see, e.g., *Frogs* 467 as well as Hesiod, *Theogony* 310–12.

Who wags his tail whenever you're dining, and, keeping a close watch,
He'll devour your fine food, whenever you gape in another direction.
And often visiting the kitchen, he'll go undetected, like a dog
At night, licking clean the dishes and the islands."

DEMOS

By Poseidon, that's much better, O Glanis!

PAPHLAGON

O Sir, listen to this, *then* form a judgment:
"There is a woman who will bear a lion in sacred Athens,
A lion who will do battle for Demos against many gnats,
As steadfastly as for his cubs. Guard him,
Building a wooden wall[183] and iron towers."
Do you know what these things mean?

DEMOS

By Apollo, I don't!

PAPHLAGON

The god was clearly indicating to you to keep me safe.
For I correspond to the lion for you.

183. Herodotus reports (7.141) an oracle of Apollo, prior to the Persian War of 480, that the whole land of Athens would be conquered except a "wooden wall." This encouraged the Athenians to put complete confidence in their navy.

DEMOS

And how did you escape my notice, having become Antileon?[184]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

There's one of the prophecies he isn't explaining on purpose—
What the "wall of iron and of wood" is,
Where Loxias[185] ordered him to keep you safe.

DEMOS

So how *did* the god mean that?!?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

This guy here
He ordered you to lock up in a five-holed wooden pillory!

DEMOS

These prophecies will soon be fulfilled, seems to me!

PAPHLAGON

Don't be persuaded by him! For "envious are the crows that caw"!
But "be a friend to the hawk, remembering him in your heart," he who
Brought back for you young Lacedaemonian ravens[186] in fetters!

---

184. At 1044, Paphlagon says that he "corresponds to the lion" (*anti tou leontos*); Demos now wonders how Paphlagon became Antileon (*Antileōn*), also the name of a tyrant of Chalcis.

185. That is, Apollo.

186. The word (*korakinous*) can also refer to a kind of fish, so called because of its black color. Paphlagon is once again referring to the Spartans captured on Sphacteria.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Paphlagon took *that* risk when he was drunk![187]

"Son of Cecrops, ill-advised, why do you hold this to be a great deed? 1055

A woman, too, might bear a weight, should a man place it on her.[188]

But she couldn't fight. For she'd crap herself, should she fight."

PAPHLAGON

But take heed of this, "before Pylos, Pylos," which [the god] declared to you:

"There is a Pylos before Pylos."[189]

DEMOS

What does this mean, "before Pylos"?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

He contends that he'll seize a pile of tubs in the bathhouse![190] 1060

DEMOS

And I'll be unwashed today?!?

---

187. Consider Thucydides 4.27–28 and 39.2 (and context).

188. The words for "woman" and "man" in this line can also mean "wife" and "husband," respectively.

189. The full verse, which may have been a proverb rather than an oracle, reads: "There is a Pylos before Pylos, and there is another Pylos besides." This is said to refer to "the dispute among three places in the western Peloponnese, all bearing the name Pylos and all claiming to be the Pylos where Nestor had ruled" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.).

190. The word for "tubs" (*pyelous*) suggests "Pylos."

SAUSAGE-SELLER

For this guy'll snatch up our pile of tubs![191]
But *this* oracle here concerns the navy,
To which you ought to pay very close attention.

DEMOS

I am—but read first how
My sailors will receive their pay.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

"Son of Aegeus, take heed of the dog-fox, lest he trick you,
Biting-without-barking, swift-footed, a wily trickster, highly shrewd."
Do you know what this is?

DEMOS

Philostratus[192] the dog-fox!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

It doesn't say that, but the swift, revenue-collecting
Ships this guy here is always asking for:
Loxias is forbidding you to give these to him.

DEMOS

So how is a trireme a dog-fox?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

How, you ask?
Well, the trireme and the dog are both swift.

---

191. This line is missing in two MSS. Sommerstein, *Knights,* among other modern editors, rejects it as a gloss, although Neil and Wilson read it.

192. A pimp (see also *Lysistrate* 957).

DEMOS

How is it, then, that the "fox" was added to the "dog"?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

It drew a likeness between soldiers and foxes
Because they nibble grapes in the fields.

DEMOS

Well then—
Where's the pay for these foxes?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll supply it, and that within three days.[193]
But listen closely to this too, to the oracle of the Son of Leto[194]
That said to you "Beware Crooked Harbor,[195]
Lest it trick you."

DEMOS

What "Crooked"?!?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

[The oracle] correctly has it that this guy's hand
Is Crooked, because he says, "Throw [a little something] in my crooked hand."[196]

193. This alludes to Cleon's evidently crazy vow to kill or capture the Spartan soldiers on Sphacteria "within twenty days" (Thucydides 4.27–28 and context).

194. That is, Apollo.

195. Literally, Cyllene (harbor)—the name of the harbor in Elis, but used here because it begins with the same syllable as does the adjective "crooked" or "twisted" (*kyll-*).

196. The cry of alms-seeking beggars.

PAPHLAGON

He's explaining it incorrectly. For when it comes to "Crooked,"
The correct thing is that Phoebus [Apollo] enigmatically spoke of
the hand of Diopeithes.[197]
But I have an oracle concerning you, a winged one,
How you'll become an eagle and rule as king over every land.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I do too! Over land and the Red Sea[198] too,
And you'll judge cases in Ecbatana, licking up cake-and-sauce!

PAPHLAGON

But I had a dream, and the goddess herself[199] seemed to me
To be pouring health-and-wealth over Demos with a pail!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

By Zeus, I had one too! And the goddess herself seemed to me
To come from the Acropolis, an owl perched upon her.
Then with a flask she poured over your head a libation of
Ambrosia—but over *this* guy, garlic brine!

DEMOS

Oh! Oh!

---

197. An expert in oracles, prosecutor of atheists, apparently possessed of a misshapen hand or hands, and "widely regarded as not quite sane" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.).

198. "This meant in the classical period not only the modern Red Sea south of the Suez Canal but also our Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea." Hence this would suggest for Aristophanes and his audience "a spot on the farthest shores of the Persian Empire." Nan Dunbar, *Aristophanes: Birds* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 180.

199. That is, Athena.

Nobody's wiser than Glanis!
And now I turn myself over to you here
"To guide me in my old age and to educate me afresh once
again"![200]

PAPHLAGON

Not yet, I beseech you, just wait a bit, since
I'll supply you with barley and your daily sustenance!

DEMOS

I can't tolerate hearing about barley! Often
I was deceived by you and Thuphanes![201]

PAPHLAGON

But I already supply you with prepared barley groats!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

But I'll supply nicely baked barley biscuits
And the relish for them too: there's nothing to do but eat!

DEMOS

You two now hurry and do whatever it is you're going to do.
Because
Whichever one of you now benefits me more,
To him I'll give over the reins of the Pnyx!

PAPHLAGON

I'm going to run inside first!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

No, but I will!

200. A fragment from Sophocles' lost *Peleus*.
201. Apparently a public official and partisan of Cleon.

[*Exit Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller*]

CHORUS

O Demos, noble
Is your rule,[202]
Since all human beings fear you
As they would a man who's tyrant.[203]
But you are easily led astray:
You delight in being flattered
And utterly deceived,
Gaping before whoever happens
To be speaking. And your mind,
Though it's around, is on vacation.

DEMOS

There's no mind in that long hair
Of yours, since you believe that I'm not sensible.
But I voluntarily
Say such foolish things.
For I myself take pleasure
In my daily feeding,
And I want to raise up
One thief as leader.
But when he's full,
Having raised him up, I knock him down.

CHORUS

That way you would do well,

202. The same word for "rule" (*archē*) can mean "empire."

203. For Athens as a tyrant, or like one, consider Thucydides 2.63 (Pericles) and 3.37 (Cleon).

If there is sagacity
In this character of yours, as you say,
Very great sagacity indeed,
If on purpose you raise up these
Like public property,
On the Pnyx, and then whenever
You happen not to have any fine food,
Whoever among these is plump
You sacrifice and dine on!

DEMOS

Examine me, as to whether I wisely
Outmaneuver them,
They who suppose they're sensible
And utterly fool me.
For I keep a constant watch over them
Even though I *seem* not to see them
Stealing. Then I force them
To vomit up again
Whatever they've stolen from me,
Using the funnel of the voting urn as a probe.[204]

[*Paphlagon and the Sausage-Seller return*]

PAPHLAGON

Get out of the blessed bloody way!

204. The suggestion is that sooner or later Demos forces the democratic leaders to give back their ill-gotten gains as the result of being found guilty by a jury.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

You, you pest!

PAPHLAGON

O Demos, I've been sitting here
For a long, long time, all ready and willing to benefit you!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And *I've* been here for ten long and twelve long
And a thousand long, long-long-long times!

DEMOS

And I, expecting [you] for thirty thousand long times,
I'm revolted by you both—and for a long-long-long time!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

So do you know what to do?

DEMOS

I will know, if you tell me.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Let us go, me and this guy, from the starting line
So we can benefit you from an equal start.

DEMOS

That's what must be done.
Off you two go [to the starting line]!

SAUSAGE-SELLER AND PAPHLAGON

There!

DEMOS

Run!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

[*To Paphlagon*] No cutting in allowed!

DEMOS

Well, either I'll be made greatly happy today
By these lovers, by Zeus, or else I'll play hard to get!

PAPHLAGON

See? I'm bringing out the seat for you first!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

But not a table! I brought that out firster! 1165

PAPHLAGON

Look, I'm bringing you this here barley biscuit
Kneaded from the grain from Pylos!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I've got breads scooped out to ladle the soup,
Made by the ivory hand of the goddess![205]

DEMOS

How big your finger is, O Mistress! 1170

PAPHLAGON

And I've got pea soup, fresh and beautiful,
That Pallas [Athena] herself, Pylisades-Fighter,[206] stirred!

---

205. The loaves must very large, since the Parthenon's statue of Athena was said to be nearly seven times life size. See also Carl A. Anderson, "Athena's Big Finger: An Unnoticed Sexual Joke in Aristophanes' *Knights*," *Classical Philology* 103:2 (2008): 175–81.

206. A genuine epithet of Athena (*pylaimachos*), "Fighter at the Gates," but its first syllable brings to mind "Pylos."

SAUSAGE-SELLER

O Demos, plainly the goddess is watching over you!
In fact right now she is holding over you a pot full of broth!

DEMOS

Yes, for do you suppose that this city would still be inhabited
If she did not manifestly hold over us her . . . pot?[207]

PAPHLAGON

This slice of fish here the Terrifier of Armies[208] has given you!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And the Daughter of the Mighty Father [has given you] meat
boiled in broth
And a slice of tripe and stomach and belly!

DEMOS

A fine thing she did, in remembering the Robe [I gave her]![209]

PAPHLAGON

The Gorgon-Crested One[210] bade you to eat this
Flat cake, so that we may row our ships finely.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Now take these things here too.

---

207. According to a famous verse of the Athenian statesman Solon, Athena held her hands over Athens in protection of it.

208. Epithet of Athena.

209. See 566 above.

210. Presumably an epithet of Athena. In its masculine form, it is applied to Lamachus in the *Acharnians*.

DEMOS

And what use will I make
Of these innards?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

She sent them to you expressly
To use as belly-timber for the triremes, the goddess did!
For she's obviously keeping a watch on the navy.
Take this too and drink it, mixed three [parts wine] to two [of water].

DEMOS

How sweet, O Zeus, and finely does it take the three parts!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Yes, for Tritogenes [Athena] made it tripartite![211]

PAPHLAGON

And now take from me a slice of rich cake!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

From me this whole cake!

PAPHLAGON

But you won't have anything from which you can give him hare's meat.[212] But I do!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Oh boy . . . where'll I get hare's meat?
O Spirit, now discover some beggarly trick!

211. Athena's epithet suggests her connection to Lake Tritonis in Libya, but here the Sausage-Seller puns on the prefix *tri-* (three).

212. Hares were rare in Attica, especially so in wartime; see Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.

PAPHLAGON

[*Brings hare out of his sack*] See *that,* you wretch?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Matters little to me!
For there are some ambassadors coming over to me,
With bags of silver!

PAPHLAGON

Where?!? Where?!?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

But what's that to you? Won't you leave the foreigners alone?
[*Snatches up Paphlagon's meat*] O little Demos! Do you see the hares I'm bringing you?

PAPHLAGON

Oh, wretched me! You've snatched up my things unjustly!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Yes, by Poseidon, just as you did with the men from Pylos!

DEMOS

[*To the Sausage-Seller*] Tell me, I beseech you, how did you think of snatching them?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

The thought belongs to the goddess, the theft was mine.
But I ran the risk![213]

PAPHLAGON

But *I* roasted it!

213. Some editors give this line to Paphlagon.

DEMOS

Go away—for the thanks go only to the person who served it up!

PAPHLAGON

Oh unhappy me! I'm going to be outdone in shamelessness!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Why don't you judge, Demos, which of the two of us
Is the better man when it comes to you and your stomach?

DEMOS

But by using what evidence
Might I seem to the audience to judge wisely?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I'll tell you. Go get
My basket, in silence, and examine what's in it,
And Paphlagon's too. Not to worry, you'll make a fine decision!

DEMOS

Well now, what's in here?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Don't you see it's empty,
Dear Grampa? For I served up *everything* for you!

DEMOS

This basket is taking thought for what concerns Demos!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Now stroll over there to Paphlagon's.
Do you see?

DEMOS

Oh! How many goods it's full of!
How big that cake is he put aside for himself!
But for *me* he sliced off just this little bit!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Yet he was doing that sort of thing to you before too—
Giving over to you a little of what he got,
While putting aside for himself the greater share!

DEMOS

You bloody bastard! You deceived me by stealing these things?!?
But I "crowned you and bestowed gifts upon you"![214]

PAPHLAGON

But I was stealing for the good of the city!

DEMOS

Put down your wreath immediately, so I
May put it on this fellow here!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Take it off immediately, you fit-to-be-whipped-crook!

PAPHLAGON

No! For I have a Pythian oracle
That indicates the only one by whom I ought to be defeated!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Indicating my name—and perfectly clearly!

---

214. This line, in Doric dialect, is of uncertain origin. Sommerstein suggests that it comes from the comic poet Eupolis.

PAPHLAGON

Well, I want to test you by means of the evidence,
If you'll turn out to accord with the things decreed by the god.
And first I'll put you to this much of a test:
When you were a boy, what school did you attend?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

I was disciplined in the slaughterhouses, with knuckles!

PAPHLAGON

What's that you said?! [*Aside*] How the oracle grips my heart!
Well then . . .
What wrestling moves did you learn from the trainer?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

When stealing, to swear a false oath while looking 'em straight in the face!

PAPHLAGON

"O Phoebus Apollo of Lycia, whatever will you do to me?"[215]
And whatever was the art you gained when you reached manhood?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Selling sausages and . . . getting screwed some!

PAPHLAGON

[*Aside*] Oh, wretched me! I'm no longer anything!
There's *some* hope remaining to which we hold fast . . .
[*To the Sausage-Seller*] And tell me this much: was it in the marketplace
Or at the city gates that you usually sold your sausages?

215. A fragment of Euripides' *Telephus*.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

At the gates, where they sell salt-fish.

PAPHLAGON

Ah! What's decreed by the god has been fulfilled!
"Roll me inside, this ill-starred fellow!"[216]
O Wreath, fare-thee-well, unwillingly
Do I leave you. But someone else, taking you up, will possess you,
One who's not more of a thief than I am . . . but maybe luckier.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Zeus of the Greeks, the victory prize is yours!

DEMOSTHENES[217]

O Gracious Noble Victor! And remember that
You've become a real man through me! And in brief I ask you
That I'll be your Phanus,[218] clerk of lawsuits!

[*Exit Demosthenes*]

DEMOS

Tell me, what is your name?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Agoracritus.
For I was raised disputing things in the marketplace.[219]

---

216. Parody of a line from Euripides' *Bellerophon*.

217. Some MSS give these lines to the Chorus, although both the Budé and the OCT give it to Demosthenes.

218. Mentioned also at *Wasps* 1220, in a list that includes Theorus and Cleon.

219. Agoracritus's name is ambiguous. Neil (ad loc.) suggests that *–critus* means "approved by" and hence "Marketplace-approved." Yet the Sausage-

DEMOS

To Agoracritus, then, I entrust myself,
And I hand over this Paphlagon here.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

And I, O Demos, will take fine care of you,
So you'll agree that you see no human being
Better than I am, for this city of Gaping-thenians!

CHORUS

"What finer thing is there for those beginning
Or ending [a song] than for drivers of swift horses not to sing of . . . "[220]
Anything against Lysistratus
Nor with a willing heart
To cause the homeless Thumantis any further pain?[221]
For he, O Dear Apollo, is ever
Hungry, and with abundant tears
Touches your quiver [in supplication],
In divine Pytho, so that he not be badly impoverished.
There is nothing invidious in reviling those who are dirty crooks;

Seller's own, presumably comic explanation of his name is different, the participle in the next line connected with it (*krinomenos*) meaning "one who judges" or "one who is judged" but also "disputing." Mitchell (ad loc.) calls this a "difficult verse" and suggests as a translation "quarrelling, battling, litigating": perhaps "marketplace-wrangler."

220. A parody of lines of Pindar (fr. 89).

221. Lysistratus was an Athenian mentioned elsewhere by Aristophanes (*Acharnians* 855–56, *Wasps* 1311–13) as being impoverished. Nothing certain is known of Thumantis, although one source reports that he was very thin.

Rather, [doing so amounts to] an honor paid to the upstanding,
for whoever reckons well.
If, then, the human being who ought to hear many bad things said
of him,
Were himself well known, I would not have mentioned a man
who's a friend.
Now there's nobody who does not know Arignotus,[222] at least not
anybody who knows white from . . . the Orthion tune.[223]
Yet he has a brother whose characteristic ways are not akin to his
own,
Ariphrades, a dirty crook.[224] But this he even *wants* to be!
But he's not only a crook—I wouldn't even have noticed him in
that case,
Not even if he were entirely crooked. But in fact, he's devised
something on top of that!
For he treats his own tongue outrageously with shameful
pleasures:
In whorehouses he licks the abominable dew,
Both soiling his mustache and stirring up their hearths,[225]
Acting like Polymnestus and associating with Oeonichus.[226]

---

222. A famous lyre player (*Wasps* 1277–78).

223. In place of the usual "white from black," Aristophanes substitutes "Orthion tune," which was "one of the most famous Greek melodies" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.); see also *Acharnians* 16.

224. See also *Wasps* 1280–83 and *Peace* 883–85, where the man is mentioned again.

225. "Hearths" is a euphemism for the female genitalia also at *Thesmophoriazusae* 912.

226. Polymnestus was a seventh-century musician, Oeonichus evidently a musician or poet. "Associating with" can also mean "having intercourse with."

Whoever, then, does not intensely loathe such a man
Will never drink from the same cup with us.
Many times in the night
I've been together with my thoughts
And inquired however in the world it is that
Cleonymus eats so easily.[227]
For they assert that he, feeding on
What belongs to wealthy men,
Wouldn't leave the trough,
But they all alike would beseech him,
"Come now, O Lord, by your knees,
Leave—have some sympathy for the table!"
They contend that the triremes gathered with one another for a parley,
And a certain one of them, who was older, said:
"You don't even inquire, Maidens,[228] about these things pertaining to the city?!
They say that somebody is requesting one hundred of us for Carthage,
A man who's a base citizen, that sour Hyperbolus."[229]
Now this was in their opinion terrible and not to be tolerated,
And someone, who had never come near men,[230] said,

227. With so great an appetite as he has; see also 958 above.

228. "Trireme" (a fast-sailing warship) is feminine in Greek, and so the ships are personified as women.

229. An ambitious Athenian politician, a lamp-seller by trade, frequently mocked by Aristophanes (*Acharnians* 846–47, *Clouds* 1065, *Peace* 690). After Cleon's death, Hyperbolus rose to take his place as demagogue. See also 739 above.

230. That is, had never been boarded by men, a "virginal" ship.

"Averter![231] [Hyperbolus] will never rule over *me,* but if I have to,
I'll grow old right here, rotting away with wormwood!"
"Nor over Nauphantes, daughter of Nauson, no indeed, O Gods!
If in fact I was built from pine and timbers!
If these things are to the Athenians' liking, I think it best that,
Sailing to the Theseum[232] or to [the shrine] of the August Goddesses,[233] we take sanctuary.
For he won't make a mockery of the city by being our general!
Just let him sail by himself—to the crows with him!—if he wants to,
Launching the trays on which he used to sell his lamps!"

SAUSAGE-SELLER

One must speak good omens and close one's mouth and abstain from calling witnesses
And close up the law courts, in which this city has taken such delight,
But given our novel good fortune, let the theater sing a paean.

CHORUS

O Light of sacred Athens and helpmate to the islands,
With what good report have you come, for which we fill with sacrificial smoke our streets?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Having boiled Demos for you, I've made him, once ugly, now beautiful!

---

231. Epithet of Apollo, who averted evils for human beings.

232. The shrine to Theseus, legendary founder of Athens as a unified whole; see Thucydides 2.15 and context.

233. That is, the Furies.

CHORUS

And where is he now, O you who've discovered wondrous notions?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

He dwells in the violet-crowned[234] Athens of olden times!

CHORUS

How might we see him? What sort of outfit is he wearing? What sort of fellow has he become?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Such as he was previously when he shared a mess with Aristides and Miltiades.[235]

But you will see. For . . . there now is the sound of the Propylaea[236] being opened!

Just give a joyful shout for the Athens of old as it comes into sight,

Both wondrous and much-hymned, where famed Demos dwells!

CHORUS

O Athens—Gleaming and Violet-Crowned and Much-Envied!

Show us the monarch of Greece and of this land!

234. An epithet of Athens in the poetry of Pindar; see also *Acharnians* 637–38.

235. Aristides, nicknamed "The Just," was an Athenian general and statesman who served during the Persian War, including at the battle of Marathon. Miltiades was from a distinguished Athenian family, and he too served as a general at Marathon.

236. The western entrance of the Acropolis; Demos emerges from the *skēnē* at the back of the stage in his new garb.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

There he is to see, wearing a golden grasshopper,[237] gleaming in his garb of old,
Smelling not of seashells[238] but of treaties, anointed with myrrh.

CHORUS

Greetings, O King of the Greeks! We share in your joy as well!
For you carry out deeds worthy of the city and of the trophy erected at Marathon.

DEMOS

O Dearest of Men, come here, Agoracritus!
So many are the goods you've done me, by boiling me!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Me?
Well, my fellow, you don't know what sort of fellow you really were before,
Or the sorts of things you used to do! For [if you did know] you'd believe me to be a god!

DEMOS

What did I do before, tell me, and what sort was I?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

First, whenever somebody should say in the Assembly,
"O Demos, I am your lover and I am your friend[239]
And I care for you and deliberate for you, I alone"—

237. An old-fashioned and aristocratic adornment characteristic of pre-democratic Athens; see Thucydides 1.6.

238. Athenian jurors used seashells or mussel shells to cast votes.

239. Consider Paphlagon's remark at 732.

Whenever somebody should use these preludes,
You'd flap your wings and toss your horns!

DEMOS

I *did?*

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Then, in exchange for these things, he'd go off, having completely fooled you.

DEMOS

What are you saying?!?
They used to say these things to me, and I didn't perceive it?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Because your ears, by Zeus, would spread open
Just like a parasol and then close up again.

DEMOS

Had I become so thoughtless and old?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Yes, by Zeus, and if two orators should speak,
The one in favor of making long ships, the other one, in turn,
For using this for public pay, the guy talking about pay
Would run right over the one talking triremes.
[*Pauses*] You there . . . why are you bowing your head? Won't you remain as you were?

DEMOS

I'm ashamed, you know, at my former mistakes.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

But you're not responsible for these things, don't fret.

Rather it's those who deceived you in this. So now tell me:
If some tricky beggar of an advocate says:
"There's no barley for your jurors,
Unless you pronounce a guilty verdict in this case,"
What, tell me, will you do to that advocate?

DEMOS

Tossing him in the air I'll throw him into the pit,
With Hyperbolus hanging from his neck!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Now there you're speaking correctly and prudently!
But as for the rest, come now, how will you govern? Tell me.

DEMOS

First, all those who row the long ships
I'll pay in full when they put in to shore.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

You just gratified many flat-bottomed little butts!

DEMOS

Then no hoplite, once placed on a roll,
Will, by going to great lengths, get himself moved to a different one,
But instead he'll stay where he was registered from the first.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

That bites Cleonymus's shield handle!

DEMOS

Nor will anyone without a beard speak out publicly in the marketplace.

SAUSAGE-SELLER

So where will Cleisthenes and Straton speak out?!?[240]

DEMOS

I mean those lads in the perfume market
Who chatter away like this while seated there:
"Wise Phaeax cleverly didn't die.[241]
For he's argumentatively aggressive and conclusive
And maxim-coining-clever and clear and striking,
Best at being able to check the uproarious."

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Aren't you skilled at flipping-off-with-the-finger whoever
chatters away?

DEMOS

By Zeus, no! Instead I'll compel them all to go hunting,
Putting a stop to their decree-making!

[*A servant holding a folding chair enters*]

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Now in that case take hold of this folding chair here
And the boy, balls and all, who'll bring it to you.
And if it seems at all best to you, use *him* as a chair to sit on!

240. Two beardless, or perhaps clean-shaven, men mocked for their effeminacy; see also *Acharnians* 122 and context.

241. That is, he was acquitted on a capital charge. Phaeax was a prominent Athenian politician around the time of the Peace of Nicias, although it is not known what charge is here at issue.

DEMOS

Blessed I am to be again in the ancient ways!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

You will indeed assert it, when
I give over to you the thirty-year peace treaty! Come here, Treaty,
quick!

[*A beautiful girl appears*]

DEMOS

O Much-Honored Zeus! How beautiful! In the name of
the gods,
Is it permissible to thirty-year-icize her?!?[242]
Wherever did you get her?

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Wasn't Paphlagon
Hiding her away inside, so you wouldn't get her?
So now I hand her over to you
To take her and go off to your fields.

DEMOS

That Paphlagon,
Who did this—I hope you'll do something bad to him!

SAUSAGE-SELLER

Nothing big—he'll just take over my art.

---

242. Aristophanes coins a term (*katatriakontoutisai*) that bears a resemblance to "thirty year" (*triakontoutidas*) but can also be taken to mean "'to pierce them (*outasi*) three times (*tria*) with a long pole (*kontos*) from below (*kata-*)'" (Sommerstein, *Knights* ad loc.).

He alone will sell sausages at the gates,
Mixing up dog meat with donkey . . . affairs.
Getting drunk he'll talk trash with the whores
And drink the water from the bathhouses.

DEMOS

You've thought out well what he deserves!
To have a shouting match with whores and bath men!
And you I invite, in return for these things, to the Prytaneum
And to the seating there, where that poisoner used to be.
Take this frog-green robe and follow along
And let someone carry off *that* guy to his art
So the foreigners whom he used to mistreat may see him!